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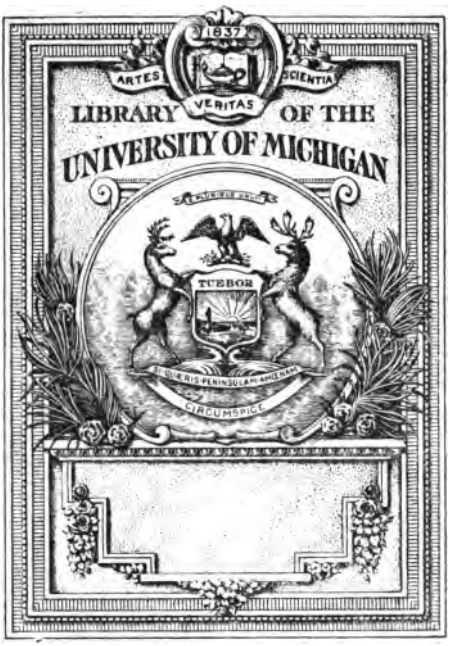
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WAGES OR THE WHIP.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

COMPARATIVE COST AND PRODUCTIVENESS

OF

FREE AND SLAVE LABOUR.

BY JOSIAH CONDER,

AUTHOR OF "THE MODERN TRAVELLER," "ITALY," ETC.

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AN ESSAY

ON THE

COMPARATIVE COST

OF

FREE AND SLAVE LABOUR.

Fouche', Napoleon's arch-minister of police, is reported to have remarked respecting the murder of the Duke D'Enghien, that it was worse than a crime: it was a blunder. The worst of crimes, in the estimation of politicians of his stamp, is a fruitless one. The doctrine which Fouché applied to what he deemed the false step of his master, though seldom so plainly avowed, is in accordance with the too prevalent philosophy alike of the cabinet and the counting-house, which makes utility the test of virtue and public morality. Fox, on one occasion, maintained in the Senate, that what is morally wrong cannot be politically right; that justice and humanity are always true policy; that they are in the end the most gainful. But this abstract principle has rarely been recognized by political economists, who regard men exclusively as governed by their real or supposed mercantile interests. Now as it is necessary, in all matters of disputation, to reason with men upon their own admitted principles, it is proposed, in the following pages, to apply the commercial test of morality to the institution of Slavery, and to shew that, according to the language of Fouché,

holding men in slavery, is worse than a crime; it is a blunder; not merely a wrong, but the most disgraceful of mistakes, a blunder in arithmetic. Should we succeed in making good our position, that slave-holding is as unprofitable as it is criminal, as costly as it is unjust; if we can prove that, in this as in all other instances, doing right is, in the long run, cheaper than doing wrong;—we shall have demonstrated to the satisfaction of even the West India Planters themselves, that slavery ought to be immediately abolished.

To arrive at this conclusion by a legitimate process, there are three steps of preliminary inquiry. *First*, Is Free labour cheaper than Slave labour, or the contrary? *Secondly*, Is Free labour, if cheaper, capable of being employed in tropical cultivation, more especially in the cultivation of sugar? Or are there any specific circumstances which render that case an exception to the general rule? *Thirdly*, Can a sufficient command of free labour be ensured in the West India colonies, to render the immediate abolition of slavery practicable and safe?

I.

Is Free labour cheaper than Slave labour? The affirmative is now all but universally admitted; so that the difficulty of securing free labour, rather than its expensiveness, is generally assigned as the reason for preferring slave labour. Still, it may not be superfluous to adduce facts and authorities to shew, both that free labour is cheaper to the employer than slave labour to the slave-owner, and why it is so.

In estimating the comparative expensiveness of the two descriptions of labour, there are three elements which enter into the computation: first, the amount expended in obtaining the labour, either in wages, or in rearing and maintenance; secondly, the quantity and quality of the

work produced by the labourer; and thirdly, the ultimate economical effects of the two systems of cultivation.

The actual expense of slave labour resolves itself into the annual sum which, in the average term of the productive years of a slave's life, will liquidate the cost of purchase or rearing, and of support in old age, if he survive the capacity for labour, together with interest and the sum annually expended in his maintenance. Now, although the expense of free labour really includes the same elements, (since the wages of labour must be such as will enable the labourer to bring up his family so as to perpetuate the supply,) the West India planters are, at this moment, complaining of part of this necessary cost of slave labour, as their peculiar burden, and one cause of the admitted depression and distress. "The West India colonist," it is said,* "is subject to a burden peculiar to himself; that of maintaining, be his profits what they may, the whole body of labourers, and of their families existing upon his land." The cost of raising children in the British colonies under the present system, is alleged to be so great, that even the old system of importation, if we may believe the West Indians, is cheaper; and it is actually made the ground of complaint, that the slave-trading of the Brazilians gives them an advantage over the British colonies. This is contrary to fact; and Mr. Cropper has shewn that, on the contrary, the great loss which the Brazilians sustain by the system of importation, is one chief means of enabling the British colonies to compete with them.† In fact, in Virginia, slaves are reared for exportation to the southern and

* Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons, ordered to be printed, April 13, 1832.

† "Not only are the newly imported slaves less effective than the Creoles, but this system of importation is dearer by 7*s.* 1*d.* per cwt. than the American, and 4*s.* 2*d.* per cwt. than that of the British colonies." Review of Report, p. 7.

western states; which must be taken as affording some proof that those who purchase them, pay a price that covers both the cost of rearing them, and a profit upon the cost. Still, ridiculous as may be the exaggerations of the West Indians, as to the comparative cheapness of rearing slaves and of importing them, it appears from their own shewing, that the cost of raising slaves is far greater than that at which the free labourer is enabled by wages to bring up his family. "The fund destined for replacing and repairing, if I may say so, the wear and tear of a slave," remarks Adam Smith, "is commonly managed by a negligent master or careless overseer. That destined for performing the same office with regard to the freeman, is managed by the freeman himself. The disorders which generally prevail in the economy of the rich, naturally introduce themselves into the management of the former: the strict frugality and parsimonious attention of the poor, as naturally establish themselves in those of the latter." This may in some measure explain the fact, which is established by well attested experience. Mr. Adam Hodgson states, that, according to an estimate made in one of the slave districts of the United States, "taking the purchase-money, or the expense of rearing a slave, with the cost of his maintenance, at their actual rates, and allowing fifteen years of health and strength, during which to liquidate his first cost, his labour will be about 25 *per cent.* dearer than that of the free labourer in the neighbouring districts."*

But labour is cheap or dear, not merely as it is more or less costly, but as it is more or less productive. What is the result of the comparison between free and slave labour

* Hodgson's Letter to Say, p. 2. See also Minutes of Evidence before the Lords' Committee, p. 838. According to an elaborate calculation furnished by John Innes, Esq. a West Indian, each negro child costs the sum of 226*l.* 14*s.* 10*d.*, by the time it comes to the age of fourteen; to justify which expense, there must be a profit on sugar five hundred times as great as at present!

in this respect? Upon this point, we find ready to our hand, some testimonies cited by Mr. Hodgson* from different writers, which we shall transcribe. The first is that of the Russian political economist, Storch, who had carefully examined the system of slavery in that extensive empire, and who gives the result of his observations in the following terms.

"The slave, working always for another, and never for himself, being limited to a bare subsistence, and seeing no prospect of improving his condition, loses all stimulus to exertion; he becomes a machine, often very obstinate and very difficult to manage. A man who is not rewarded in proportion to the labour he performs, works as little as he can: this is an acknowledged truth, which the experience of every day confirms. Let a free labourer work by the day, he will be indolent: pay him by the piece, he will often work to excess, and ruin his health. If this observation is just in the case of the free labourer, it must be still more so in that of the slave.

"Whilst the ancient Romans cultivated their lands themselves, Italy was renowned for fertility and abundance; but agriculture declined when abandoned to slaves. Then, the land, instead of being brought under the plough, was transformed into meadows, and the inhabitants of that fine country became dependent for their subsistence on provinces situated beyond the sea. The small proprietors and farmers disappeared, and the same country which had formerly presented the smiling aspect of a crowd of villages, peopled with free men in easy circumstances, became a vast solitude, in which were scattered, here and there, some magnificent palaces, which formed the most striking contrast with those miserable cabins and subterranean dens in which the slaves were shut up. These facts, related by the Roman historians, are attested and explained by Pliny, Columella, and Varro. 'What was the cause of these abundant harvests?' asks Pliny, speaking of the early periods of the republic. 'It is, that at that time, men of consular dignity devoted themselves to the cultivation of their fields, which are now abandoned to wretches loaded with irons, and bearing on their forehead the brand of their degraded condition.' The

* See Hodgson's Letter to Say. 1823.

superiority of free over slave labourers, is even acknowledged by the masters, when they have sufficient intelligence to judge of the difference, and sufficient honesty to avow their sentiments. Recollect on this subject the passage of Columella, which I have already quoted, and in which he depicts the negligence and perverseness of slave labourers. In the same chapter, he advances as a fundamental principle, that, whatever be the nature of the cultivation, the labour of the free cultivator is always to be preferred to that of the slave. Pliny is of the same opinion.*

" Observe, that this testimony in favour of free labour, is given by Romans, who were at once proprietors of slaves, and the most eminent writers on agriculture of their time. In manufactures, the superiority of the free labourer over the slave, is still more obvious than in agriculture. The more manufactures extend in Russia, the more people begin to feel the truth of this remark. In 1805, M. Panteleyef, a manufacturer in the district of Moscow, gave liberty to all his workmen who were slaves, the number of whom amounted to 84. The same year, M. Milioutin did the same."

" If slave labour were cheaper than free labour," remarks Mr. Hodgson, " we might confidently presume that estates would be rendered less productive by the emancipation of the slaves which cultivated them; but the presumption is contradicted by experience. ' A few Polish nobles,' (observes Coxe, in his travels in Poland,) ' of benevolent hearts and enlightened understandings, have acted upon different principles, and have ventured upon the expedient of giving liberty to their vassals. The event has shewn this to be no less judicious than humane, no less friendly to their own interests than to the happiness of the peasants; for it appears that, in the districts in which the new arrangement has been introduced, the population

* Mr. Blair, in his recent Inquiry into the State of the Romans, calls in question the accuracy of Dickson's opinion, (first published in 1788,) that the cost of slave labour in ancient Italy, was dearer than that of a free operative labourer in Britain. He thinks, that that writer assumed much too high an average price of a working slave, and is disposed to estimate the annual cost, including interest on the purchase, at from 9*l.* 10*s.* to 14*l.* 10*s.* a year. But a free Roman labourer's wages for the year, would not, he calculates, have been above 8*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*; so that he would have been a still less expensive labourer than a slave. Blair's Inquiry, pp. 161—285.

of their villages has been considerably increased, and the revenues of their estates augmented in a triple proportion. The first noble who granted freedom to his peasants, was Zamoiski, formerly great chancellor, who, in 1761, enfranchised six villages, in the palatinate of Masovia.' 'These villages were, in 1777, visited by the Author of the Patriotic Letters, from whom I received the following information:—On inspecting the parish registers of births, from 1750 to 1760, that is, during the ten years of slavery immediately preceding their enfranchisement, he found the births 434; in the first ten years of their freedom, from 1760 to 1770, 628; and from 1770 to the beginning of 1777, 585. By these extracts, it appeared that, during the

First period, there were only 43 births
Second ditto . . . . . 62 ditto } each year.
Third ditto . . . . . 77 ditto

" 'The revenues of the six villages, since their enfranchisement, have been augmented in a much greater proportion than their population. In the state of vassalage, Zamoiski was obliged, according to the custom of Poland, to build cottages and barns for his peasants, and to furnish them with food, horses, and ploughs, and every implement of agriculture: since their enfranchisement, they are become so easy in their circumstances, as to provide themselves with all these necessaries at their own expense, and they likewise cheerfully pay an annual rent in lieu of the manual labour formerly exacted by their master. *By these means, the receipts of this particular estate have been nearly tripled.*

" 'The example of Zamoiski has been followed by Chreptowitz, vice-chancellor of Lithuania, and the Abbé Bryzolowski, with similar success. Prince Stanislaus, the king of Poland, has warmly patronized the plan of giving liberty to the peasants. He has enfranchised four villages not far from Warsaw, in which he has not only emancipated the peasants from their slavery, but even condescends to direct their affairs. He explained to me, in the most satisfactory manner, that the grant of freedom was no less advantageous to the lord than to the peasant, provided the former is willing to superintend their conduct for a few years, and to put them in the way of acting for themselves. He intends giving the public a particular account

of his arrangements, and will show how much he has increased the value of his estate, as well as the happiness of his peasants.'"

The following additional testimonies are cited by Mr. Hodgson. The first is taken from the elaborate treatise on Colonial Policy, by the present Lord Chancellor.

"'It requires very little argument to prove,' remarks Mr. Brougham, 'that the quantity of work which may be obtained from a labourer or drudge, is liable to be affected as much by the injurious treatment he receives, as by the idleness in which he may be permitted to indulge. When this drudge is a slave, no motive but fear can operate on his diligence and attention. A constant inspection is, therefore, absolutely necessary, and a perpetual terror of the lash, the only prevention of indolence. But there are certain bounds prescribed, even to the power of the lash. It may force the unhappy victim to move, because the line of distinction between motion and rest, action and repose, is definite; but no punishment can compel the labourer to strenuous exertions, because there is no measure or standard of activity. A state of despair, and not of industry, is the never failing consequence of severe chastisement; and the constant repetition of the torture only serves to blunt the sensibility of the nerves, and to disarm punishment of its terrors. The body is injured, and the mind becomes as little willing as the limbs are able to exert.'"

"Hume remarks: 'I shall add, from the experience of our planters, that slavery is as little advantageous to the master as to the man. The fear of punishment will never draw so much labour from a slave, as the dread of being turned off, and not getting another service, will give a free man.'

"Burke observes, in his treatise on European Settlements: 'I am the more convinced of the necessity of these indulgences, as slaves certainly cannot go through so much work as free men. The mind goes a great way in every thing; and when a man knows that his labour is for himself, and that the more he labours, the more he is to acquire, this consciousness carries him through, and supports him beneath fatigues, under which he would otherwise have sunk.'

"'That the proprietors of West India estates,' observes Dr.

Beattie, ' would be in any respect materially injured by employing free servants (if these could be had) in their several manufactures, is highly improbable, and has, indeed, been absolutely denied by those who were well informed on this subject. A clergyman of Virginia assured me, that a white man does double the work of a slave; which will not seem wonderful, if we consider that the former works for himself, and the latter for another; that by the law, one is protected, the other oppressed; and that in the articles of food and clothing, relaxation and rest, the free man has innumerable advantages. It may, therefore, be presumed, that if all who serve in the Colonies were free, the same work would be performed by half the number, which is now performed by the whole. The very soil becomes more fertile under the hands of free men. So says an intelligent French author, (Le Poivre,) who, after observing that the products of Cochin China are the same in kind with those of the West Indies, but of better quality, and in greater abundance, gives for a reason, that ' the former are cultivated by free men, and the latter by slaves;' and therefore argues, ' that the negroes beyond the Atlantic ought to be made free.' ' The earth,' says he, ' which multiplies her productions with profusion under the hands of a free-born labourer, seems to shrink into barrenness under the sweat of the slave.'

" ' It is an ill-grounded opinion,' says Franklin, in his Essay on the Peopling of Countries, ' that by the labour of slaves, America may possibly vie in cheapness of manufactures with Great Britain. The labour of slaves can never be so cheap here, as the labour of working men is in Great Britain. Any one may compute it. Reckon, then, the interest of the first purchase of a slave, the insurance or risk on his life, his clothing and diet, expenses in his sickness and loss of time, loss by his neglect of business, (neglect which is natural to the man who is not to be benefited by his own care or diligence,) expense of a driver to keep him at work, and his pilfering from time to time, (almost every slave being, from the nature of slavery, a thief,) and compare the whole amount with the wages of a manufacturer of iron or wool, in England; you will see that labour is much cheaper there, than it ever can be by negroes here.'

" Koster, in his Travels in the Brazils, observes: ' The slave-

trade is impolitic, on the broad principle, that a man in a state of bondage, will not be so serviceable to the community, as one who acts for himself, and whose whole exertions are directed to the advancement of his own fortune; the creation of which, by regular means, adds to the general prosperity of the society to which he belongs. This undoubted and indisputable fact must be still more strongly impressed on the mind of every one who has been in the habit of seeing the manner in which slaves perform their daily labour. The indifference and extreme slowness of every movement, plainly point out the trifling interest which they have in the advancement of the work. I have watched two parties labouring in the same field, one of free persons, the other of slaves; which occasionally, though very seldom, occurs. The former are singing, joking, and laughing, and are always actively turning hand and foot; whilst the latter are silent, and if they are viewed from a little distance, their movements are scarcely to be perceived.'

"Hall, adverting to the pernicious effects of slavery on the southern states of North America, observes: 'Experience shews, that the quantity of labour performed by slaves, is much below that of an equal number of free cultivators.'

"An intelligent American gentleman, to whom queries on this subject were sent out, remarks: 'I have, in one of my answers, exposed the effect of slave-cultivation on the soil of our country, and on the value of real estate. I will here further observe, that, independently of this, there is no fact more certainly believed by every sound mind in this country, than that slave labour is abstractedly in itself, as it regards us, a great deal dearer than labour performed by freemen: this is susceptible of clear proof.'

"Dr. Dickson, who resided in Barbados as secretary to the late Hon. Edward Hay, the Governor of that island, observes, in a letter published in his valuable work, on the Mitigation of Slavery: 'You need not be informed, that it has been known for many ages, by men of reflection, that the labour of slaves, whether bought or bred, though apparently cheaper, is really far dearer in general than that of free men.' 'The arguments which support this conclusion, as applicable to modern Colonial slavery, were long ago assented to and exemplified by men intimately acquainted with and interested in the subject.' In another letter in the same work,

he gives 'a calculation made under the guidance of M. Coulomb, an able mathematician and experienced engineer, who for many years conducted extensive military works both in France and the West Indies, and has published the result of his observations.' From this he infers, 'that field slaves do only between a third and a half of the work despatched by reluctant French soldiers, and probably not more than a third of what those very slaves would do, if urged by their own interest, instead of brute force, as Mr. Steele experienced.' In speaking of Mr. Steele's experience in another place, he remarks: 'He has ascertained as a fact, what was before known to the learned as a theory, and to practical men as a paradox, *That the paying of slaves for their labour, does actually produce a very great profit to their owners.*' Again, this able and experienced writer observes: 'The planters do not take the right way to make human beings put forth their strength. They apply main force, where they should apply moral motives, and punishments alone, where rewards should be judiciously intermixed. And yet, strange to tell, those very men affirm, and affirm truly, that a slave will do more work for himself in an afternoon, than he can be made to do for his owner in a whole day or more. Now what is the plain inference? Mr. Steele, though a stranger in the West Indies, saw it at once, and resolved to turn it to account. He saw that the negroes, like all other human beings, were to be stimulated to permanent exertion only by a sense of their own interests, in providing for their own wants and those of their offspring. He therefore tried rewards, which immediately roused the most indolent to exertion. His experiments ended in regular wages, which the industry he had excited among his whole gang, enabled him to pay. Here was a natural, efficient, and profitable reciprocity of interests. His people became contented; his mind was freed from that perpetual vexation, and that load of anxiety, which are inseparable from the vulgar system; and in *little better than four years, the annual nett clearance of his property was more than tripled.*'

"'I must additionally refer,' remarks the same intelligent writer in another place, 'to an excellent pamphlet, entitled Observations on Slavery, (published in 1788, and now out of print,) by my late worthy friend Dr. James Anderson, who shews that the labour of a West India slave costs about thrice

as much as it would cost if executed by a free man. Taking another case, he demonstrates, that the labour of certain colliers in Scotland, who, till our own times, were subjected to a mild kind of vassalage, regulated by law, was twice as dear as that of the free men who wrought other coal-mines in the same country, and thrice as dear as common day labour.' "

" Slave labour," remarks President Cooper of South Carolina, " *is, undoubtedly, the dearest kind of labour:* it is all forced; and forced, too, from a class of human beings who, of all others, have the least propensity to voluntary labour, even when it is to benefit themselves alone.

" What is the value of a negro at full age of twenty-one? From birth to fifteen years of age, including food, clothing, life insurance, and medicine, he will be an expense. From fifteen to twenty-one, his labour may be made to pay the cost of his insurance, attendance, maintenance, and clothing. The work he can do from birth to fifteen years of age will scarcely compensate the insurance of his life, and the medicine and attendance he may need.... I think, all hazards included, and all earnings deducted, the lowest cost of a negro of twenty-one, to the person who raises him will, on an average, be five hundred dollars.

" *The usual work of a field hand is barely two thirds of what a white day labourer at usual wages would perform. This is the outside!*"

Estimating the food, clothing, and medicine of a field hand at 40 dollars a year, and adding interest on the capital laid out in his purchase or in rearing him, (which the Author contends, to cover risk, ought to be, at least, ten per cent.,) his cost, he says, will be 90 dollars per annum for two thirds of a day's work of a white man, or 120 dollars per annum for negro labour of the same amount in quantity as a white man's. " Upon this calculation, they are both equal in cost. *But an overseer is necessary to a negro, and not to a white labourer.*" " *Nothing will justify slave labour in point*

of economy, but the nature of the soil and climate, which incapacitates a white man from labouring in the summer time; as on the rich lands in Carolina and Georgia. In places merely agricultural, as New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, slave labour *is entirely unprofitable.* It is even so in Maryland and Virginia."*

This admission, from an individual holding so high a station in a slave-holding state, and surrounded by slave proprietors, is little short of decisive. The qualification with which it is accompanied, will be found, on examination, to have no force. The nature of the soil and climate, it is true, may be such as to incapacitate a white man from labouring in the summer time. Yet, if that white man be a slave,—and many slaves are notoriously of a colour and breed very nearly approaching to white,—this is held by the owner to be no sufficient reason for exempting him from such labour. But what is to hinder a *free black* from labouring under those circumstances? President Cooper, knowing well the prejudices of his countrymen, does not venture to hint at the possibility of employing free black labour,—knowing it to be impracticable to *combine* it with slave labour; and thus, the only comparison he institutes, is between slave labour and white labour. But, according to his own shewing, if free black labour could be substituted, "nothing could justify slave labour in point of economy!" For, even supposing that a white day labourer would in general perform more work than a black day labourer, (a point which we by no means concede,) the cost of the latter would be so much less, as more than to compensate for the inferior productiveness of his labour.

President Cooper, however, assumes, that the blacks are a class of human beings who have less propensity than any others to voluntary labour, even when it is to benefit themselves alone; and he might, therefore, deem himself

* Cooper's Elements of Pol. Econ. pp. 106, 7.

warranted to conclude that only forced labour could be obtained from them. This erroneous conclusion will be fully disproved hereafter. In this place we shall merely adduce from another American publication of authority, an account of the alleged effects of emancipation upon the liberated blacks transported to the African colony of Liberia; premising, that the writer is an enemy to emancipation, except on the unrighteous condition of transportation, and that we wholly disapprove of the ultimate drift of his argument.

"The (Colonization) Society has always contended, that, debased as the blacks are but too generally among ourselves,—their misfortune, and not their fault,—the most ignorant and humble of them were capable of becoming, under favourable circumstances, intelligent, industrious, and competent, in every point of view, for all the offices of an independent, social, and civil community. The experiment has succeeded to a very encouraging extent. Removed from the thraldom of slavery, and the pressure of circumstances more humiliating and degrading than slavery itself, *the slave, when he leaps a free man upon the shore of his own ancient land, seems to throw off his very nature with his chains.* The accounts to this effect, which reach us from all quarters are gratifying in the highest degree. Take, for example, Mr. Mechlin's description of the manumitted slaves sent out in 1828, by the Harriet. They were located on farms at Caldwell, a town beautifully situated at the junction of two fine rivers, and consisting of one street, about a mile and a half long, kept very clean, and planted on either side with rows of plantains and bananas. An ornamented open space is left between these and the water. Mr. Mechlin says, 'I was particularly struck with the great progress made by the Harriet's people in the cultivation of their farms, and had I not known to the contrary, should have supposed they had occupied them, at least, two or three years. In short, the whole place is in a high state

of cultivation, and the inhabitants, by their industry, have placed themselves above want.' The advances made by the recaptured Africans, under the admirable management of the Society in regard to them, have been equally surprising. Of the one hundred and forty-two colonized in 1828, only twenty remained, at the end of a week, a charge to the United States, by whom they were sent out. The majority were put out to service with old settlers for a certain term, with the expectation of being afterwards treated like other emigrants. A few months subsequently, the colonial agent describes them as having more than equalled his highest anticipations. More recently, they have been comfortably settled upon farms of their own. In 1830, the Vice-agent speaks thus of the ninety-one persons of the same class, colonized early in that season:—'I cannot perceive that the climate has any effect upon the recaptured people per the Heroine. They have been placed on lands assigned them; and have already constructed twenty superior country houses, thatched in a manner peculiar to themselves, and far surpassing those of any of the natives. As regards the old ones of this class, I consider them as the most independent men whom we have. Could you behold their neat town of New Georgia, you would be delighted, and could hardly believe that *these were the individuals, who, when in the United States, in a state of bondage, had no thought for the morrow.* They supply our markets with vegetables, potatoes, fowls, melons, &c.; and the readiness with which the sales have been effected, has been a spur to their industry. Many of them also labour in this settlement all their spare time, besides attending to the cultivation of their farms.'" *

If, then, such be the actual transformation which the liberated slave exhibits on touching the shores of Africa, where the climate is not more favourable to labour than in the Carolinas or Jamaica, what is to prevent the slave from throwing off his very nature with his chains, on the western

* North American Review, No. LXXVI. p. 157.

shores of the Atlantic or in the islands of the Caribbean Sea? Unless this can be shewn to be precluded by some physical impossibility, some local cause of mysterious force, sufficient to counteract the natural elasticity of the mind relieved from the pressure of the iron yoke, nothing, to use the words of the American Professor, will justify slave labour in point of economy.

But the ultimate cost of the system is also to be taken into the estimate of the comparative expensiveness of slave labour: the ultimate cost arising from a wasteful and deteriorating husbandry on the one hand, and on the other, from the contingent social evils, which demand a precautionary provision.

That the soil of all the estates cultivated by slave labour, becomes in time so exhausted as to yield a very diminished produce, is too notorious to be denied. Indeed, it forms a topic of complaint on the part of the planters themselves. But the true cause of that exhaustion is not so generally known. Some persons have supposed it to arise from a peculiarity in the cultivation of the cane; but this is an error. Wheat, oats, or barley would exhaust the soils to an equal degree, if cultivated year after year without a change. In many counties of England, the regular alternation of cattle and green crops, while adding cattle to the productions of the soil, has, at the same time, greatly increased the production of grain. No improvement of this kind has been generally introduced into the Colonies. The following remarks upon this subject are taken from a Report drawn up by Dr. Nugent, and read to the Agricultural Society of Antigua:

"With regard to the state of our live stock, and the production of manure consequent thereon, our situation here may not inaptly be compared to what it was in many parts of Great Britain, especially in those districts which have a bleaker air and poorer soil, prior to the introduction of the turnip and clo-

ver system. The natural pastures yielded comparatively but little food, even during the summer months; and the cattle in many districts were so much reduced during winter, that half the next grass season was scarcely sufficient to restore their condition; and when the winter was long and severe, numbers perished by famine. The vast addition to the quantity and quality of the dunghill by the consumption of clover and similar grasses, and turnips, &c., has been the means of rendering productive those inferior soils, which, under the old system of successive corn crops and naked fallow, it had become impossible to cultivate with profit; and even the fine lands have been so much benefited as perhaps to have since doubled their return of grain. The experience of the Island of Barbados appears to be still more in point. By repeated cropping, the soil had become, less than half a century since, so much worn as to be almost unproductive in the sugar cane; but, by the substitution of other crops, particularly the Guinea corn, a system of soiling and tethering cattle was introduced, which, increasing largely the store of dung, has not only been the means of retrieving the lands, but has, perhaps, made them more productive than ever; adding, at the same time, to those numberless conveniences and resources which never fail to proceed from a due attention to the brute animals. . . . Fortunately, *the cane is not*, perhaps, *so rapid an exhauster of the soil, as are the culmiferous plants, the staple crops of Europe.*"*

Nothing can be more wasteful and extravagant than the whole system of slave cultivation. In a paper published in the proceedings of the Barbados Agricultural Society, Major Moody estimates, that 25 per cent. of all the labour annually employed on an estate in that island, was devoted to the collection of matters to serve as manure. The method of applying manure to the land, by carrying it out in baskets on the heads of the labourers, is as tedious and irksome as it is disgustingly filthy: it is, perhaps, says Dr. Nugent, "*the most wasteful application of labour ever conceived; such as could have originated only where there was a*

* Porter on the Sugar Cane, p. 308—310.

great superabundance of hands, or where there may have been a necessity of manuring some steep, mountainous, and rocky situations. The use of the plough, fortunately," he adds "invites to the adoption of more compendious methods of attaining the results."* But the use of the plough is almost unknown in the West Indies, although strongly recommended by Bryan Edwards forty years ago, and the diminution of human labour which might thereby be effected, is immense.† The primitive hoe is still, as among the most barbarous nations, the chief implement used in turning up the soil. Wherever slave labour is employed, we find the same wretched and improvident husbandry, the same indifference to all expedients for saving labour, the same repugnance to improvements of every kind, the same deterioration of the soil, and the same ruinous results.

The indirect expense of slavery, through the waste of labour which it entails, is a circumstance of material import. We find an American slave owner, D. Murray, Esq. of Maryland, thus expressing his high satisfaction at having sent off thirty of his slaves to Liberia. "I have never regretted parting with them, and would not have them back again on any consideration. *Three white men now do the work of the thirty;* and maintaining the women and children cost quite as much as the labour of the white men. Farming has now become quite a delightful employment: formerly it was a perfect drudgery; and *my slaves would as willingly return from independence to slavery, as I would accept the ungrateful task of again becoming an overseer.*"‡

But further, the ultimate cost of slavery includes the state expenditure which it renders necessary in order to provide against the dangers inseparable from the existence of a servile class. "In every state," remarks Michaelis, while apologizing for the institution of slavery, "wherein the

* Porter, p. 302. † See Ibid, p. 295.

‡ Reports of the Pennsylvania Colon. Soc. p. ix.

number of slaves is very great, there must be reckoned the very same number of unarmed subjects, who, while they contribute nothing to its defence, because they cannot be entrusted with arms, must nevertheless be maintained; and there is yet this further danger, that the slaves, sensible at last of their strength as well as their hardships, may seize upon arms, and become masters of the country. The histories of Rome and other nations record examples of such servile wars." * This consideration, he admits, presents a formidable objection against the system. Wherever a servile caste exists, a standing military force is required to over-awe and control them. The expense of this military police, whether borne by the colony itself, or by the parent country, must obviously be taken into the calculation, in estimating the cost of slave labour. We shall see hereafter, how formidable an item it actually forms in the account of the burdens entailed upon this country by the West India colonies.

Thus far, we have confined our attention to the illustration of the general principle, that slave labour is dearer than free labour; dearer in its prime cost, dearer from its inferior productiveness, and dearer from the waste and bad economy to which it uniformly leads, as well as from its cost to the State. This view of the economical objections against slavery has been admirably illustrated by a popular female Writer, Miss Martineau, in her Tale of Demerara. In the summary of principles appended to that Tale, the leading points are thus succinctly stated.

" Where the labourer is not held as capital, the capitalist pays for labour only.

" Where the labourer is held as capital, the capitalist not only pays a much higher price for an equal quantity of labour, but also for waste, negligence, and theft on the part of the labourer. Capital is thus sunk, which ought to be reproduced.

* Michaelis, Laws of Moses, Vol. II. p. 156.

" As the supply of slave labour does not rise and fall with the wants of the capitalist, like that of free labour, he employs his occasional surplus on works which could be better done by brute labour or machinery.

" By refusing brute labour, he refuses facilities for convertible husbandry, and for improving the labour of his slaves by giving them animal food.

" By rejecting machinery, he declines the most direct and complete method of saving labour. Thus, again, capital is sunk which ought to be reproduced.

" In order to make up for this loss of capital to slave-owners, bounties and prohibitions are granted in their behalf by Government; the waste committed by certain capitalists abroad, being thus paid for out of the earnings of those at home.

" Sugar being the production especially protected, every thing is sacrificed by planters to the growth of sugar. The land is exhausted by perpetual cropping; the least possible portion of it is tilled for food; the slaves are worn out by over-work; and their numbers decrease in proportion to the scantiness of their food, and the oppressiveness of their toil. When the soil is so far exhausted as to be out of reach of the sugar bounties, more food is raised, less toil is inflicted, and the slave population increases."

This is decidedly proved by the increase of the slave population in those islands where little sugar is cultivated. Not only is the decrease of the slave population peculiar to the sugar colonies; but it is a remarkable fact, established by Mr. Buxton in his evidence before the House of Lords' Committee, that that decrease keeps pace with the increase of sugar pretty accurately throughout. There are two exceptions to the general decrease of population among the sugar colonies; Dominica, where the numbers are nearly stationary, and Barbados, where there is a considerable increase. But in both these colonies, the quantity of sugar

produced in proportion to the population, is so small, that, in point of fact, the full weight of the system in the sugar colonies does not fall upon the negroes in those islands. The quantity of sugar grown in Trinidad, is 18 cwt. for each negro; the quantity in Barbados is somewhat under 3 cwt., and in Dominica, about the same quantity *. It is observable also, that Barbados is the only sugar colony in which an improved system of cultivation has been introduced by the alternation of other crops, so as to economize labour.

In the United States of America, the slave population increases so rapidly as to have become a source of anxiety and alarm to the Government, and to render the superfluous labour a positive burden to the slave-owner. The explanation of this fact is, that, in the old states, where the same improvident system of cultivation has been persisted in, the land is so exhausted by the tobacco crops, that the slaves cannot reproduce so much as they consume. This must ere long have led to the extinction of slavery in those districts, or to the utter ruin of the proprietors, had not the increased demand for slave labour in the more southern states, occasioned by the great increase of the cotton plantations, led to the revival of an extensive *slave-trade* in the heart of the United States. Under these circumstances, the more northern plantations have been converted into "a vast breeding ground," where negroes are reared for the express purpose of supplying the fatal and ever-widening market in the states bordering on the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi. † In the Middle States, in Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina, slave labour has long ceased to be profitable; and the time is anticipated as not very distant, when *slave-breeding* will also cease to answer. After perusing the following remarks upon this subject from the pen of the Hon. Henry Clay, one of the most distinguished

* Report of Select Com. p. 828. † Basil Hall, Vol. III. p. 195.

among the American statesmen, the reader will perhaps feel some difficulty in deciding, whether the increase of the slave population in the United States, or its murderous decrease in the British sugar-colonies, supplies matter for the most melancholy and indignant reflections.

"In proportion to the multiplication of the descendants of the European stock, and the consequent diminution of the value of slave labour, by the general diminution of wages, will there be an abatement in the force of motives to rear slaves. The master will not find an adequate indemnity in the price of the adult for the charges of maintaining and bringing up the offspring. His care and attention will relax; and he will be indifferent about incurring expenses when they are sick, and in providing for their general comfort, when he knows that he will not be ultimately compensated. There may not be numerous instances of positive violation of the duties of humanity, but every one knows the difference between a negligence which is not criminal, and a watchful vigilance, stimulated by interest, which allows no want to be unsupplied. The effect of this relaxed attention to the offspring will be, to reduce the rates of general increase of the slave portion of our population, whilst that of the other race, not subject to the same neglect, will increase and fill up the void. A still greater effect, from the diminution of the value of labour, will be that of voluntary emancipations; the master being now anxious to relieve himself from a burthen, without profit, by renouncing his right of property. One or two facts will illustrate some of these principles. Prior to the annexation of Louisiana to the United States, the supply of slaves from Africa was abundant. The price of adults was generally about 100 dollars, a price less than the cost of raising an infant. Then it was believed that the climate of that province was unfavourable to the rearing of negro children, and comparatively few were raised. After the United States abolished the slave trade, the price of adults rose very considerably; greater attention was consequently bestowed on their children; and now, nowhere is the African female more prolific than she is in Louisiana, and the climate of no one of the Southern States is supposed to be more favourable to rearing the offspring. The serfs of Russia possess a market value

inferior to that of the African slaves of the United States; and, although the lord is not believed to be bound to provide for the support of his dependent, as the American master is for his slave, voluntary manumissions of the serf are very frequent, influenced in some degree, no doubt, by his inconsiderable value.

"What has tended to sustain the price of slaves in the United States, has been, that very fact of the acquisition of Louisiana, but especially the increasing demand for cotton, and the consequent increase of its cultivation. The price of cotton, a much more extensive object of culture than the sugar-cane, regulates the price of slaves as unerringly as any one subject whatever is regulated by any standard. As it rises in price, they rise: as it falls, they fall. But the multiplication of slaves, by natural causes, must soon be much greater than the increase of the demand for them; to say nothing of the progressive decline which has taken place in that great Southern staple, within a few years, and which there is no reason to believe will be permanently arrested. Whenever the demand for the cultivation of sugar and cotton comes to be fully supplied, the price of slaves will begin to decline; and as that demand cannot possibly keep pace with the supply, the price will decline more and more. Farming agriculture cannot sustain it; for it is believed, that nowhere in the farming portion of the United States would slave labour be generally employed, if the proprietor were not tempted to raise slaves, by the high price of the Southern market, which keeps it up in his own.

"But neither this nor any other conceivable cause can, for any length of time, check the fall in the value of slaves to which they are inevitably destined. We have seen that, as slaves diminish in price, the motive of the proprietors of them to rear the offspring will abate, that consequent neglect in providing for their wants will ensue, and consequent voluntary emancipation will take place. That adult slaves will, in process of time, sink in value even below a hundred dollars each, I have not a doubt. This result may not be brought about by the termination of the first period of their duplication, but that it will come, at some subsequent, and not distant period, I think perfectly clear. Whenever the price of the adult shall be less than the cost of raising him from infancy, what inducement will

the proprietor of the parent have to incur that expense? In such a state of things, it will be in vain that the laws prohibit manumission. No laws can be enforced or will be respected, the effect of which is the ruin of those on whom they operate. In spite of all their penalties, the liberation or abandonment of slaves will take place."

Here, then, we have arrived at the startling, the damning fact, that slave labour is not only dearer than free labour, but that its profitableness absolutely depends upon keeping down the increase of the slave population. The natural fecundity of the negro would otherwise work out the emancipation of his race. The excess of labourers above all possibility of employing them, would render them a ruinous charge and burden to their owner. The slave-market itself would in time be glutted, as it well nigh is at present in the United States.* America, remarks the Author of an eloquent discourse on Slavery,† "to be safe, must either be virtuous enough to emancipate her slaves, or wicked enough to introduce the midwives of Egypt, the *Crypteia* of Lacedæmon, or the night-work of Jamaica." Slavery can perpetuate itself, only by this murderous diminution of the human species. Nature herself is the constant enemy of the slave-owner, threatening him continually with an inundation of his living capital, that shall destroy his profits, and ruin him with his own wealth.

It is obvious, then, that no slave-owner can have any inducement to economize labour, however dear that labour may be, because that very economy would be fatal to him, unless he could get rid of the superfluous labour. He not only can afford to waste that labour, and to destroy the life that yields it, by wearing out the labourer, but it is his interest to do so, to prevent its unprofitably accumulating upon his

* Mr. Hodgson was informed, that from 4000 to 5000 per annum are sent down to New Orleans. Letters, &c. Vol. I. p. 194.

† Halley's "Sinfulness of Colon. Slavery," p. 23.

hands. All that he can wish is, to keep up the numbers of his slaves, unless he were permitted to sell the redundant increase. But, in point of fact, so dear is slave labour on the one hand, and of so little value the life of the slave on the other, that, in order to realize his profits upon that labour, the planter finds it necessary to sacrifice a certain quantity of slave life, and to exact an excess of toil at the cost of a diminution of numbers. Slavery must be abolished, with the burdens which it entails, before the motive to employ the cheaper labour of the freeman, or to economize the dear labour of the slave, can come into operation.

II.

But, although slave labour may be ordinarily dearer than free labour, so as to be infallibly displaced by it whenever they can be brought into fair competition, as in the agricultural States of America; still, it may be thought, that the cultivation of sugar and other tropical produce forms an exception to the general rule. It is admitted, that "sugar, rice, and cotton are almost the only articles of profitable slave labour;" and that "hence it has become the dearest species where they cannot be produced."* But, in respect

* This conviction, or rather this ascertained fact, is assigned by an American writer as the explanation of the readiness of American slave-holders, "whose benevolence revolts at the idea of selling their slaves," to manumit them gratuitously, on the sole condition of their being removed to Africa. In proof of this, the following instances are adduced. "Mr. Minge, of Charles County, Virginia, not only emancipated more than *eighty* slaves, for the purpose of sending them to Hayti, but chartered a brig for their transportation, furnished them with supplies, and distributed a peck of dollars among them as a farewell present. Mr. Henshaw, near Richmond, liberated sixty, to be sent to Liberia. A year or two subsequently, a gentleman in Kentucky writes to the Society, that he 'will give up twelve or fifteen of his coloured people now, and so on gradually, till the whole are given up (sixty), *if means for their passage to Liberia can be provided.*' In January 1829, offers were pending to the Society of more than two hundred slaves, ready to be manumitted on the same conditions. At that time, thirty had just been sent out from Maryland, and twenty-five from South Carolina;

to these, it may be contended, that free labour, even if cheaper, would be inapplicable, and could not be employed. To examine the grounds of this doubt or allegation, forms the second step of our present inquiry.

And here we are met at once by the broad fact, that all the sugar cultivated in India, the original country of the cane, is cultivated by free labour. It is also notorious, that the sugar grown by slave labour cannot compete in cheapness with that which is grown by free labour in the East Indies. Attempts have been made to escape from the conclusive force of this fact, by representing the East India sugar to be the produce of slave labour; but this representation is utterly devoid of the semblance of truth. Whatever may be the condition of the servile classes on the coast of Malabar, where no sugar is grown, the agriculture

and to pass over several hundreds more, who have either been colonized, or necessarily neglected for want of funds, and as many more whose freedom has been provided for by will, on condition of removing, we find it stated in Mr. Carey's pamphlet, and in the last Annual Report of the Society, that in North Carolina and the adjacent States alone, 'the applications for transportation of free negroes, *and slaves* proposed to be emancipated on conditions of removal to Liberia, far exceeds its means.' *From three to four thousand* of both descriptions, we are afterwards informed, are ready to embark. In 1830, it appears, that the Society of Friends belonging to the State just named, had enabled six hundred and fifty-two coloured persons under their care to emigrate, with an unknown number of children, husbands, and wives, connected with them by consanguinity. Many of them are understood to have been slaves. Their generous benefactors had then expended nearly thirteen thousand dollars; and four hundred and two persons remained, who were also to be removed. It is not easy to calculate how much more rapidly this process might have gone on, had the Society directed its entire attention to promoting it. This they have not been in a situation to do with propriety. Until the last season, they have not even employed a General Agent for the Western States; and yet, the person now acting in that capacity, writing to the Secretary a few months since from New Orleans, observes, that he has found more men of influence and distinction, (slave-holders,) who manifest an unshaken determination to sustain any effort that may be made in favour of the cause, than in any other place. He then gives a detail of facts, which shew, that hundreds are ready to be manumitted in all the Western States, whenever the means of sending them off shall be matured." North Amer. Rev. No. lxxvi. p. 148.

of the Bengal provinces, which supply the whole of the sugar exported from India, is entirely conducted by free labour. Slavery, indeed, of a mild character, is not unknown in Bengal. "Throughout some districts," it is stated in an official document, "the labours of husbandry are executed by bond servants. In certain provinces, the ploughmen are mostly slaves of the peasants for whom they labour; but, treated by their masters more like hereditary servants, or like emancipated hinds, than like purchased slaves, they labour with cheerful diligence and unforced zeal. In some places, also, the landholders have a claim to the servitude of thousands among the inhabitants of their estates. This claim is seldom enforced, and.... slaves of this description do, in fact, enjoy every privilege of a free man, except the name: or, at the worst, they may be considered as villains attached to the glebe.... Though we admit that slaves (of this description) may be found in Bengal among the labourers in husbandry, yet, in most provinces, none but freemen are occupied in the business of agriculture." The price of their daily labour is less than 2d. sterling; and, "viewed in every way, labour is six times, perhaps ten times, dearer in the West Indies than in Bengal."*

The following Extract from a Minute of the Bengal Board of Trade, Aug. 7, 1792, is important, not only as confirming the above statement of the fact, but for the light which it throws on the causes of the superior cheapness of labour, and of the sugar raised by such labour in Bengal, as compared with the slave labour and produce of the West India Colonies.

"The agriculture of the latter is carried on under circumstances so forced and unnatural, that, while they excite the indignation

* Extracts from Remarks on the Husbandry of Bengal, in Report of Lords' Committee, p. 862. Sir Edw. Hyde East, who was a West Indian, but held a high official situation in the East, said, "there was such a thing as slavery in India, but it was not recognized by the Government: if a slave chose to leave his master, *the law would not prevent it.*"

and pity of the philosopher, they create his astonishment that a concurrence of incidents in human affairs could ever have established them. In order to obtain a rude produce of the ground, human beings have been forced from a country about 4000 miles distant from that which they are to cultivate; and, whatever may have been their former condition or habits of life, are compelled to the rudest toil. None of the West India labourers are aborigines, none of them are freemen. The whole are slaves imported as above described, or the descendants of such imports; and their population is so continually on the decrease, that regular supplies from Africa are deemed necessary to keep up the requisite number. So confined are the territories of these islands, at least of the British West India islands, and of several of the French, that, without neglecting those productions which are the objects of the northern nations, they are unable to furnish the food necessary for the support of their own inhabitants. Grain, flour, salt meat, and salt fish are carried, at a great expense, from the distant regions of Europe and North America, and form the principal subsistence of the slaves.

"It is superfluous to dwell upon the heavy charge of the establishment of overseers and superintendents requisite for urging the labour of the slaves; but it is sufficient to observe, that the expense of obtaining the produce of the ground by such means will necessarily be above the natural level.

"In this country (Bengal), the cultivator is either the immediate proprietor of the ground, or he hires it, as in Europe, of the proprietor, and uses his discretion in cultivating what he thinks best adapted to the nature of the soil or the demand of the market. One field produces sugar; the next, wheat, rice, or cotton. The husbandman is nourished and clothed from his own ground; or, if he thinks it more his interest to sell the whole of his produce, supplies himself and family with the necessaries of life from his neighbour, or from the next public market.

"In the British West India islands, the value of a seasoned ordinary man slave, in the prime of life, is about 60*l.* say C. Rs. 600, and the interest of money is there about six per cent.; consequently, C. Rs. 36 per annum is the value of the stock per head, supposing the stock permanent. Rs. 36 per annum is more than the average price of labour in this country. The

death of the slaves decreases the stock in the proportion, taking the matter in a general view, that the number of slaves born in the islands are insufficient to keep up the requisite number without importation from Africa. The Bengal peasantry are freemen, and are, in the usual course of nature, replaced by their children.

" Other circumstances have their effects. The West India slave has no interest in the success of his labour. A good crop alleviates not his condition, a bad one renders it not worse, while he receives his daily ration of European or American grain and salt provision. There is no cheering motive to animate his industry. The proprietor of the estate often resides in Europe, and leaves the management to hired servants, to the consequences of whose knavery and negligence he is open, while his slaves are exposed to their want of humanity.

" The Bengal Peasant is actuated by the ordinary wants and desires of mankind. His family assist his labour, and soothe his toil, and the sharp eye of personal interest guides his judgment.

" Of superiority of soil on either side, the Board are incompetent to speak, but they observe that those provinces contain a great variety of very excellent soils. Two circumstances they, however, notice.

" In the West India islands, mills and boiling-houses greatly abridge labour, but these mills and boiling-houses are expensive structures. In Bengal, the mill and places for boiling the juice cost very little indeed; they are extremely simple, slight, and cheap. The difference of value between the two, must compensate, in a great degree, the greater quantity of labour the latter require. In one respect, however, labour is certainly less. In the West Indies, works are stationary. The cane, a heavy material when just cut, must be carried to them from the most distant parts of the plantation; a very laborious business. In Bengal, the mill, boiling vessels, and covering shed are so extremely light that they are easily removed from field to field as occasion requires, and consequently prevent the labour of distant carriage of the cane.

" In the West Indies, the whole labour of the ground is performed by hand with the spade or hoe. Here, the ox and plough, as in Europe, lessen the labour of man, and facilitate the productions of the earth.

"Great part of the West India islands are frequently subject to hurricanes so violent that they destroy the sugar-works and ruin the planter. This country is not so often, nor to so great a degree, subject to similar calamity; and were a sugar-work to be entirely destroyed, the loss would be trivial. Inundations are frequent, but the cane is cultivated upon grounds so high as generally to be above the highest rise of the river."

East India Sugar, &c. First Appendix, pp. 52, 53.

In the work on East India sugar, from which this is taken, extracts are given from a letter addressed to the Hon. the Court of Directors by William Fitzmaurice, Esq., dated Calcutta, February 6, 1793. This gentleman, having lived in Jamaica sixteen years, during which he had been employed in the cultivation and management of sugar estates on both sides of the island, must be regarded as thoroughly competent to form a decisive opinion respecting the comparative advantages of the two countries; and he expresses that opinion in the following terms. "From the luxuriant fertility of this country, I think it is amply competent to the supply of all Europe with sugars; and that *even the West India planters themselves might import them from hence on much easier terms than they can afford to sell sugars in the curing-houses upon the plantations*.... The cultivation of the cane will employ thousands of poor people that are to be seen in all parts of this country in real want; and inasmuch as the cultivation of the sugar-cane destroys annually, in the West, thousands of men, women, and children by incessant toil, it will save the lives of thousands in the East, by giving them employment and sustenance." *

The evidence of Mr. Botham, printed in the "Report of the Committee of the Lords of the Council appointed for

* *Ibid.* p. 857. The mechanical process used in Bengal for expressing the cane juice, is extremely rude, awkward, and unprofitable; but, by any tolerable care and attention to the West India mode of clarification and boiling in the first process, the writer remarks, the soil might be rendered equally productive.

the consideration of all matters relating to Trade and Plantations, March 28, 1789," is too important to be omitted. This gentleman, after passing two years in the English and French West India islands, was employed in conducting some sugar-estates in the East Indies; and he offers his evidence in proof that sugar of a superior quality and an inferior price to that grown in the West India islands, is produced in the East Indies, where the culture of the cane, as well as the manufacture of the sugar and arrack, is carried on, he says, by free people. "China, Bengal, the Coast of Malabar, all," he proceeds, "produce quantities of sugar and spirits; but the most considerable growth of the cane is carried on near Batavia." He then describes the improved manner in which sugar-estates were there conducted by Chinese husbandmen and manufacturers on the estates of the Dutch proprietors, explaining its superiority over the West India mode of cultivation; and states, "that, having experienced *the difference of labourers for profit and labourers from force*," he "can assert that the savings by the former are very considerable." "The West India planter," continues Mr. Botham, "for his own interest, should give more labour to beast, and less to man. A larger portion of his estate than is now allotted, ought to be in pasture. When it is practicable, canes should be carried to the mills in waggons; cane tops and grass to the stock in the same manner; the custom of making a hard-worked negro provide a bundle of grass twice a day, abolished; and in short, a total change take place of that miserable management our West India islands are now under. By this means, following as near as possible, the East India mode of culture, consolidating the distilleries, I do suppose, *our possessions in the sugar islands might be better worked than they now are, by two thirds, or indeed half of the present force employed.* Let it be considered how much labour is lost by the persons necessary to

oversee the forced labourer, all of which is saved when he works for his own profit. I have stated with the strictest veracity, a plain matter of fact. *The sugar estates can be worked cheaper by free persons than by slaves.* Whether the African slave-trade can be abolished, and the blacks in the West Indies emancipated, is for the consideration of the Legislature. As far as my judgement goes, these desirable purposes can be effected without materially injuring the West India planter. He has but to improve his culture, and lessen human labour, and the progeny of the present blacks in our colonies will answer every purpose of working the West India estates."*

Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, in his History of Java, gives some interesting details relating to the cultivation of the cane, by the natives, to be eaten as a sweet-meat, but by the Chinese for the juice. " The quality of the sugar made in Java is considered to be equal," he says, " to that of Manilla and the West Indies. Considerable quantities are sent to the Malabar coast, but the principal exportation is to Japan and Europe." Mr. Crawfurd, in his History of the Indian Archipelago, has given a long account of the husbandry of the sugar-cane, and furnishes the following estimate of its comparative market value.

" The quality of Java sugar will be best ascertained from comparing it with other sugars in the market in which it is best known. When a pound of Java sugar, mixed brown and white, sells in the market of Rotterdam for $10\frac{1}{2}$ groats,

Bengal sells for 9 groats.	Brazil sells for 10 groats.
British West India $9\frac{1}{2}$	Havannah . 14
Surinam . . . $9\frac{1}{4}$	Manilla . . 10

It may be observed in respect to the quality of these sugars, that those of Manilla, Java, and the Brazils, are nearly equal.

* Report, &c. pp. 867—9. Mr. Botham for some time conducted some sugar-works at Bencoolen by free labourers. Marsden, in his History of Sumatra, highly commends his management, and states, that the expenses, *particularly of the slaves*, had frustrated many former attempts of the English to cultivate the sugar-cane profitably at that place.

"Edwards has estimated the price of growing sugar in Jamaica at 18*s.* 9*d.* per cwt. By the estimate I have furnished, this *is* 125 *per cent. dearer than Java sugar.*" *

Not only in Java, but both in Cochin China and in China, the cane is cultivated, and sugar manufactured with success, according to the testimonies of Sir George Staunton, Mr. Abel, Mr. Barrow, and M. de Guignes, and other travellers of note and authority. In fact, an attempt was made to plant a colony of Chinese in the Mauritius, for the purpose of trying the experiment of cultivating sugar there by free labour. But it was found, that freedom and slavery could not simultaneously exist. "This," says Mr. Buxton, "is a point established by all the information that has been collected on the subject; that there must be a pure system of slavery, or a pure system of freedom; that they cannot be united together." †

In further proof, however, of the feasibleness of cultivating sugar, even in gangs, by free labour, the official report of Mr. Ward, late the British Envoy to Mexico, affords a most remarkable testimony. The following abridged transcript comprises all the facts bearing on our present argument:

"Mexico, March 13, 1826.

"SIR,

"The possibility of introducing a system of free labour into the West India Islands having been so much discussed in England, I conceived that it might not be uninteresting to His Majesty's Government to receive some details respecting the result of the experiment in this country, where it certainly has had a fair trial.

"I accordingly took advantage of Mr. Morier's prolonged stay here, to visit the Valley of Cuernavaca, and Cuantla Amilpas, which supplies a great part of the federation with sugar and coffee, although not a single slave is at present employed in their cultivation.

* Cited in Report of Lords' Committee, p. 867. † Report, p. 869.

"The valley which extends almost uninterruptedly from Cuernavaca to Cuantla Amilpas, and Jyncar, (covering a space of about forty miles,) is situated on the road to Acapulco, at the foot of the first range of mountains by which the descent from the Table Land towards the south-west commences, about fifty miles from the Capital. It is about 2,000 feet lower than the Table Land of Mexico. The difference of temperature is proportionably great, so that two days are sufficient to transport the traveller into the very midst of Tierra Caliente.

"It is believed that the sugar-cane was first planted there about one hundred years ago; from that time, the number of sugar-estates has gone on increasing, until there is now hardly an acre of ground on the whole plain which is not turned to account. The cultivation was originally carried on entirely by slaves, who were purchased at Vera Cruz, at from 300 to 400 dollars each. It was found, however, that this system was attended with considerable inconvenience, it being impossible to secure a sufficient supply of slaves during a war. The losses likewise, at all times, were great, as many of the slaves were unable to support the fatigue and changes of temperature, to which they were exposed on the journey from Vera Cruz to Cuernavaca, and perished, either on the road, or soon after their arrival.

"Several of the great proprietors were induced by these circumstances to give liberty to a certain number of their slaves annually, and, by encouraging marriages between them and the Indians of the country, to propagate a race of free labourers, who might be employed when a supply of slaves was no longer to be obtained.

"This plan proved so eminently successful that, on some of the largest estates, there was not a single slave in the year 1808.

"The policy of the measure became still more apparent on the breaking out of the revolution in 1810.

"The planters who had not adopted the system of gradual emancipation before that period, saw themselves abandoned, and were forced, in many instances, to give up working their estates, as their slaves took advantage of the approach of the insurgents to join them en masse; while those who had provided themselves with a mixed cast of free labourers, retained, even during

the worst times, a sufficient number of men to enable them to continue to cultivate their lands, although upon a smaller scale.

"The scale upon which these estates are worked, is enormous. From a supposition that the ground is exhausted by two successive crops, the Mexican planters run into the contrary extreme, and divide their sugar-lands into four equal parts, one only of which is taken annually into cultivation. The remaining three are turned to no account, so that an idea may be formed of the extent of an estate upon which so enormous a quantity of land is allowed to remain unemployed.

"The crops are usually most abundant, the cane being planted much thicker than is customary in Jamaica, and the machinery, in the opinion of Dr. Wilson, who accompanied me, and who has been much in the West India Islands, is fully equal to any used in the British colonies.

"The number of workmen generally employed upon an estate capable of producing 40,000 arrobas of sugar, amounts to 150, with occasional additions when the season is late, or the work has been retarded by any accidental cause.

"The labourers are mostly paid by the piece, and many of them can earn, if industrious, from six to seven rials per diem. (*3s. 3d.* or *3s. 9½d.* English money, reckoning the dollar at *4s. 4d.*)

"Fifty men are employed in watering the canes; twenty in cutting, ten in bringing the cut canes from the field, (each with six mules,) twenty-five (mostly boys) in separating the green tops, which they use for fodder, and binding up the remainder for the muleteers; twenty men, divided into gangs of four each, in feeding the engine day and night; fourteen attend the boilers; twelve keep up the fires; four turn the cane in the sun, after the juice has been expressed, and dry it for fuel; and ten are constantly at work in the warehouse, clarifying the sugar, and removing it afterwards to the general store-room, from whence it is sent to the market.

"The art of refining, though well understood, is seldom or never carried beyond the first degree of the process, there being no demand for double-refined sugar in the market; and the consequence is, that, though abounding in saccharine matter, the article is for the most part coarse in appearance, and of a bad colour.

"The arroba of 25lbs. sells in Mexico for about three dollars,

or two dollars and a half, if not of the best quality. The great *haciendas* expend in wages to the workmen, and other current charges, from 800 to 1,200 dollars a week.

"It often happens, however, that in a good year the sale of the molasses alone is sufficient to defray this expense, so that the sugar remains a clear profit.

"For every arroba of sugar an equal quantity of molasses is produced, which sells, at the door of the *hacienda*, for five rials and a half the arroba. It is bought up by the proprietors of the small distilleries, which abound to such a degree, that, in the neighbourhood of Cuernavaca alone, from 25,000 to 30,000 barrels of Chingarito (a sort of rum) are made annually.

"The distance from Cuernavaca to Cuantla is about twenty-five miles; and, with the exception of a ridge of mountains which separates the two valleys, the whole intervening space is richly cultivated.

"It is a curious fact, that an immense quantity of sugar is yearly remitted to Vera Cruz, not for exportation, but for the home consumption of a province which might produce sugar enough to supply all Europe, if it chose to turn to account the advantages with which nature has so richly endowed it.

"*The most remarkable circumstance, however, is the total abolition of slavery in a district where such a mass of colonial fruits is produced, and the success with which the introduction of free labour has been attended. It is this which has induced me to lay these observations before His Majesty's Government, and to hope that they may be esteemed not wholly unworthy of its attention.*

(Signed) "H. G. WARD."*

"Right Hon. G. Canning, &c. &c."

Scarcely less remarkable and to the point is the account given by Baron Humboldt, of the successful result of an experiment made by a noble proprietor of an extensive district in the valley of Aragua, in Colombia, some years before the late revolution in South America. During the learned Traveller's stay at Cura, he was surprised to witness in every direction, not only the progress of agriculture, but the increase of a free laborious population, accustomed to toil, and too poor to rely on the assistance of slaves.

* Anti Slavery Reporter, vol. iii. p. 36—39.

" Our host," (Count Tovar,) he proceeds to state, " whose father had a revenue of 40,000 piastres, possessed more lands than he could clear; he distributed them in the valleys of Aragua among poor families, who chose to apply themselves to the cultivation of cotton. He endeavoured to surround his ample plantations with freemen, who, working as they chose, either on their own land, or in the neighbouring plantations, supplied him with day-labourers at the time of harvest. Nobly occupied on the means best adapted gradually to extinguish the slavery of the Blacks in these provinces, Count Tovar flattered himself with the double hope of rendering slaves less necessary to the landholders, and furnishing the freed-men with opportunities of becoming farmers. On departing for Europe, he had parcelled out and let a part of the lands of Cura, which extend toward the west at the foot of the rock of Las Viruelas. Four years after, at his return to America, he found on this spot, finely cultivated in cotton, a little hamlet of thirty or forty houses, which is called *Punta Zamuro*, and which we afterwards visited with him. The inhabitants of this hamlet are almost all Mulattoes, Zamboes, or free Blacks. This example of letting out land has been happily followed by several other great proprietors. The rent is ten piastres for a *vanega* of ground, and is paid in money, or in cotton. The price of hands is cheaper here than in France. A freeman, working as a day-labourer (*peon*), is paid, in the valleys of Aragua, and in the *Llanos*, four or five piastres a month, not including food, which is very cheap on account of the abundance of meat and vegetables. I love to dwell on these details of colonial industry, because they prove to the inhabitants of Europe, what to the enlightened inhabitants of the colonies has long ceased to be doubtful, that *the continent of Spanish America can produce sugar and indigo by free hands: and that the unhappy slaves are*

capable of becoming peasants, farmers, and landholders." *

This truly enlightened and philosophic Traveller, whose extensive opportunities of observation give weight to his opinion on such a subject, takes repeated occasion to expose the impolicy as well as inhumanity of slavery. Admitting, for argument sake, that sugar could be cultivated only by slaves, he shews that the total aggregate of the slave population in the West Indies, is nearly three times greater than the number actually employed in the cultivation of sugar. "Those," he remarks, "who repeat incessantly, that sugar cannot be cultivated but by black slaves, seem to be ignorant, that the Archipelago of the West Indies contains 1,148,000 slaves, and that the whole mass of the colonial produce of the islands is obtained by the labour of only five or six hundred thousand. More than three-fourths of the Brazilian slaves are occupied neither in gold washings nor in the cultivation of colonial productions, which, we are gravely told, render the slave trade an inevitable political crime." † In this point of view, M. Humboldt contends, that slavery, "the greatest of evils that afflict humanity," is made to press upon three times the number of individuals that are required for the agricultural labours which are supposed to demand slave labour. So unreasonable and delusive is the pretext that is set up for the perpetuation of slavery in the Colonies.

But it has been sufficiently shewn, not merely that sugar and other colonial produce *can* be cultivated by free labour, but that the produce of free labour would soon drive that of slave labour out of the market, were it not for the bounties and protecting duties which have hitherto enabled the West India planter to maintain, not a fair competition, but

* Humboldt's Pers. Narr. Vol. IV. pp. 126—8.

† Pers. Narr. Vol. VII. pp. 208, 9.

an odious and pernicious monopoly. Strange to say, the produce of free labour has been discouraged by our Legislature, in order to protect that which involves the perpetuation of crime and misery. The cane is virtually forbidden to grow in its indigenous soil, where God has planted it, that we may force its cultivation in another hemisphere, by means which His word condemns;—by holding thousands and hundreds of thousands of our fellow-men in the most abject and degrading bondage. We have first transplanted the cane itself, and then have transported Africans across the Atlantic, to cultivate it with tears and blood; while, in India, there were already provided to our hand, the plant, the soil, and the free labour. Or we might have taken the cane to Africa, and there have established our colonies in regions not more pestilential than Demerara or the Antilles. Instead of this, we have compromised the interests of both India and Africa for the sake of the West India monopoly.

Nor is this the whole amount of the sacrifice. We speak not now of the cost of life which the maintenance of this system has rendered necessary; although the conquest of India itself, which has placed under the British supremacy more than an eighth part of the human race, might be shewn to have cost fewer lives than have been sacrificed at the blood-stained altars of the Kali of the western world, Colonial Slavery. "Of the crowds who yearly and daily emigrate from their houses to those possessions," remarks Mr. Jeremie, (late first President of the Royal Court of St. Lucia,) "how many return? Of the military, what hundreds of thousands have not perished there!* The slight insur-

* "The loss of money, be it ever so great, cannot compare with the cruel waste of life occasioned by sending our soldiers to those pestilential regions, whose very atmosphere is, in many cases, death to the uninured whites, and certain loss of health to all. In 1826, of the eighty-three regiments then in the British service, twenty were placed in the West Indies, being only three less than the number of those which were then stationed in distracted Ireland, (excluding the reserve corps,) and only six less than are in Ireland at this present eventful crisis. While twenty regiments were

rection of 1796 in St. Lucia, cost Great Britain, of regulars alone, 4000 men. More blood has been spilt in that small island, in warfare, within the last half century, than in any part of

required for the West Indies, nine were deemed sufficient for Britain. If we inquire, against what enemy so large a force was accumulated, we find the West Indies threatened with no danger from without; their only danger was from within. The British fleet had possession of the sea; Britain was at peace with all the world; but slavery could not be maintained without the presence of a force, which might have spread the influence of Britain over the furthest east, but which, without a battle or an enemy, was wasting away under the influence of a West Indian climate.

"In June 1829, when Parliament ordered the returns to be laid before them of the mortality of our army in the West Indies, those returns were withheld; and Parliament acquiesced in the non-production of them, on the implied understanding that they contained details too horrible to meet the public eye.

"The then Secretary of War, Sir Henry Hardinge, was reported to have said, that the inspection of these returns would 'be too horrifying for the public.' What then are we to think of the iron nerves of those rulers who can calmly surrender their fellow-citizens to evils too horrible to be contemplated?

"Will the Secretary of War exult in having nerves to execute that, which the body of the nation are not supposed to have nerves to bear the recital of? But has Britain much reason to rejoice in rulers who possess so extraordinary a pre-eminence above their fellow-citizens, in the intrepidity with which they can contemplate human life unprofitably squandered away? Anxiously, however, as they were concealed, a part of those horrors have transpired. The then Secretary of War is understood to have allowed that, out of three regiments, consisting of 2700 men, sent to one of the islands, one-third had perished in one season! If the choice had been offered to those unfortunate regiments, to decline the duty, on condition of having every third man of them shot upon the spot, they would have been gainers, had they preferred the horrible alternative. They would have been spared the previous pangs of wasting sickness; they would have died in their own land, and in the sight of their friends, bedewed with their tears, and been buried by their hands. Nor let us suppose that the loss of these regiments was limited to a third. Death did not cease his work the following years, though his havock may be most dreadful on the first. How many more might have perished, or what feeble remnants of these devoted regiments might have returned to their country, is known only to the Secretary of War, and those of his colleagues who have nerves to face the greatness of the disaster. No doubt, if the present colonial system were abolished, we might still be obliged to keep up some military force in the West Indies; but a much less might suffice, and the regiments might mainly consist of blacks, upon whom the climate does not produce such baleful effects, and who might relieve the white troops of the most wasting part of their duty. But, while slavery exists, so large a

the world, except Belgium. With reference to the life of the slave, during the continuance of the slave-trade, and *now in Martinique*, if a newly purchased slave lasted *five years*, the speculation was a good one. In thirteen years, the whole labouring population was said to be renewed. On the other hand, in all the Duke of Wellington's continental wars, commencing with his landing in Spain, and concluding with Waterloo, the killed in action, it is said, did not amount to one fifth of the number systematically consumed, since the peace, in the small island of Martinique. Nor do they equal half the decrease in our own colonies within the last ten years.* Now reckon the number of slaves in the British colonies, the number of them in the United States, (possessions formerly British,) and the length of time this wholesale consumption of human life has been carrying on; and judge of the fearful responsibility that attaches to this nation.†

white force is absolutely necessary to maintain the system of compulsory labour and the lash."—Douglas's Address on Slavery, &c.

The average mortality, according to documents given by Edwards, is 11½ per cent. *per annum*. See Edwards's West Indies, vol. v. Appendix.

* According to a statement, drawn entirely from official documents, and delivered in by Mr. Buxton in his examination before the Lords' Committee, the total decrease in the slave population on the sugar colonies in eleven years, has been 52,539 on a population of little more than 800,000, being more than a 16th.

† In the one hundred and six years from 1680 to 1786, there were imported into the British West India Islands, according to the custom-house registers, 2,130,000 negroes from the coast of Africa; and yet, in the year 1788, the total slave population of those colonies was estimated at only 454,160 souls, *being little more than one-fifth part of the number imported*. In the course of three centuries, Jamaica alone has received from Africa, 850,000 negroes, (between the years 1700 and 1808 nearly 677,000,) and yet, that island does not now possess more than 346,150 slaves and about 40,000 free blacks, – considerably less than half the number of Africans imported, notwithstanding the strong mixture of white blood in the present slave population. Before the abolition of the slave-trade, Jamaica lost annually 7,000 individuals, or 2½ per cent. on the slave population. Taking into account the numbers lost in the middle passage, in order to produce the present black population of the British West Indies and the United States, bond and free, (about 3,350,000,) and allowing for the increase on the slave

"And what for?" continues Mr. Jeremie. "To change the very face of nature. Columbus and the earlier navigators have described these older colonies as they stood clothed in the most brilliant verdure: they are now arid, parched, and exhausted. Cultivation elsewhere converts deserts into gardens; here, gardens into a desert. How comes it that St. Lucia, Trinidad, and Demerara are still so rich and fertile? Because they are but recently inhabited. And why but recently inhabited? Because those very parched and exhausted colonies originally presented greater inducements.*

Speaking of the island of St. Lucia, this gentleman thus remarks upon the anomalies which it presents. "It produces every kind of wood, even to the most precious; yet, chairs and tables are more cheaply obtained from England. Its pasturages are among the finest in the world, requiring little care, and at a nominal rent; and yet beef salted and brought from Europe, is cheaper than the fresh beef of the country.... With land sufficient to furnish the whole West Indian islands with ground provisions, a population not amounting to one twentieth the number the island can support, alternately fluctuate between famine and superabundance. When provisions are scarce, the free population and the slaves plant freely, and the market is soon furnished to repletion; the remainder is then allowed to rot on the ground, until a scarcity produces re-action. In short, one kind of interest only exists, and that is pampered and fostered to its own destruction. Now, indeed, the planter is

population of the United States, from four to five millions at least of Africans must have been torn from their native shores, and forcibly borne across the Atlantic. The vast numbers of those born in the islands that have perished prematurely as the victims of slavery, can be estimated only by the fact, that every eight or ten years, while the trade continued, the slave population must have been renewed, either by births or by fresh imports, and this during more than a century! See Humboldt, Vol. vii. p. 147—152.

* Jeremie on Colonial Slavery, p. 39—40.

truly wretched; for his fetters only remain, and he clings to them from habit and necessity. *Weighed down by his home connexions, and by the very nature of his property, he works, and feels he must work on, to his all but inevitable ruin.* In a free country, the minds of the million are stimulated to separate exertion: each seeks out new channels of employment. There is an elasticity in free communities, which soon re-establishes a certain degree of prosperity; but in slave countries, the million are mere machines; the minds of the hundred alone are at work; and even *they* find the application of brute force sufficient for their purpose: *so that the very manufacture which they have laboured in for centuries, is still in its infancy.* And this fact again accounts for the assumed natural stupidity of the negro." *

In shewing that sugar and other tropical productions may, in common with all other produce, be raised more advantageously by free labour, we are not bound to prove that such labour could be profitably combined with the present wasteful and barbarous agriculture. In estimating the comparative advantages of Free and Slave labour, we have a right to take into account all the labour that might be saved, when it should become the interest of the planter to economize labour. If, for example, ten free labourers could do the work of twenty slaves, we are not required by our argument to prove, (although this perhaps might be proved,) that twenty free labourers would cost less than twenty slaves. If free labourers would do in twelve hours the same quantity of work that an equal number of slaves would perform in sixteen, we are not concerned to prove that free persons would labour for wages sixteen hours a day, as the slaves are compelled to do under the whip. Suppose it should be found that the free labourer was found unwilling to submit to the disgusting toil of the manure basket, the planter

* Jeremie, pp. 59, 60.

would be no loser by being compelled to adopt a less wasteful method; or even were he reduced to the necessity of substituting the plough for the hoe, in order to make free labour available for the culture of sugar, he would have no great reason for either complaint or regret.* One special advantage which he would derive from the abolition of slavery, is the necessity it would lay him under, of taking some steps forward in the improvement of his husbandry. By the present system, the master or owner is fettered as well as the slave. The planter cannot discharge his labourers. His capital, being invested in the purchase of his slaves, is fixed and inconvertible. He has no alternative but, whether at a profit or a loss, to work them on. Even if made sensible how much it would be for his interest to introduce those improvements in colonial husbandry that

* In Mr. Loving's Evidence before the Commons' Committee, the following important statements occur relative to this point:

"Is it not the fact, that they could not cultivate the sugar cane otherwise than by acting in gangs, as they do in a state of slavery, which is adverse to the natural condition of people in a state of freedom?—I think that the planters have depended too much upon manual labour in the cultivation of their estates, and hence the avidity they shew for having large gangs. I think a great deal of the machinery of this country might be introduced into the West Indies with considerable advantage; there is, for example, a gang called the weeding gang; now I consider them quite an unnecessary thing.

"With reference to cane hole digging, have you ever contemplated the substitution of machinery for manual labour for that process?—Certainly; there are several planters, who are more wise than others, who make use of the plough constantly. We know that the plough can turn up the soil, and other machinery reduce it into that state in which the cane can be planted.

"Must it not be the interest of the planter to diminish the number of slaves upon his estate, and to substitute, as far as possible, machinery for manual labour?—Unquestionably.

"And yet is it not the fact, that manual labour is held to be indispensable for the cultivation of sugar?—There is no doubt that that is the fact.

"How do you account for the planter, whose interest it is to substitute machinery for manual labour, not doing it to a greater extent?—Because I conceive he has not sufficient confidence in the superior benefits of machinery to manual labour."

would economize labour and improve the soil, he is, in many cases, not at liberty to adopt a different system; because, although it would benefit the planter, it would not suit the consignee or merchant. If the sugar crops were diminished in order to increase the provision crops, or to promote the rearing of cattle with a view to the use of the plough, the merchants' commissions, both on the sugar imported and the supplies exported, would be abridged. They are therefore opposed to all improvements in the system, and the planters are in their power. The mortgagee may threaten to foreclose, and the dependent borrower has no option but to submit. The sugar *must* be raised, at whatever cost of negro life, at whatever loss to the planter.* Yet, so well aware is the merchant that sugar-planting by Slave labour is a losing game, that he prefers, for the most part, the risk

* This is more especially the case where the proprietor is an absentee. The estates that are in debt, are usually managed by an attorney, and the receivers appointed are generally very oppressive. (See Evidence of Vice-Admiral Fleming before the Commons, 2915.) The following case has occurred. An attorney or manager of an estate receives an imperative order from England to raise and export a given quantity of sugar. His experience enables him to calculate the number of slaves who will probably fall victims to the requisite exaction of excessive labour. He reasons with himself thus. "If I refuse to execute this order, I shall be discharged from my situation. If I execute it, it will occasion the death of so many negroes on the estate; the loss will be imputed to my mismanagement; and in that event also, I may lose my place." But the latter alternative presents a chance, and he adopts it. The sugar is produced; the predicted number are worked to death; and the overseer is blamed by the absentee, if not dismissed. Upon whom devolves the guilt of the cruelty? Speaking of the island of Cuba, Humboldt says: "The mortality of the negroes is very different, as in all the West Indies, *according to the kind of culture*, the humanity of the masters and overseers, and the number of negresses who can take care of the sick. There are plantations in which from 15 to 18 *per cent.* perish annually. *I have heard it coolly discussed*, whether it were better for the proprietor not to fatigue the slaves to excess by labour, and consequently to replace them less frequently, or to draw all the advantage possible from them in a few years, and replace them oftener. *Such are the reasonings of cupidity, when man employs man as a beast of burden!*" Personal Narr., vol. vii. p. 152.

of losing his money, to the greater risk of becoming the proprietor of the mortgaged plantation! Such is the predicament to which the sugar-planter has been brought by an infatuated adherence to a barbarous system of cultivation; a condition to which he could not have been reduced, had he employed free labour. He is himself a bondsman to a system which is to him, if we may be allowed the expression, as "a law of sin and death." Because he must grow sugar, he must have slaves; and because he has slaves, he must grow sugar. Within this vicious circle, his ideas and arguments move round, spell-bound, or rather mortgage-bound.* His capital, his living capital, is diminishing year by year, while his necessities are consequently requiring more and more produce to be extorted from an impoverished soil by more and more labour. Is this an overcharged description? Hear what Bryan Edwards, the great champion of the West India colonists, says upon this point.

"The produce of these islands, though of such value to the mother country, *is raised at an expense to the cultivator, which, perhaps, is not equalled in any other pursuit, in any other country of the globe.* It is an expense, too, that is permanent and certain; while the returns are more variable and fluctuating than any other, owing to calamities to which these countries are exposed both from the hands of God and man; and it is mournful to add, that the selfish, or mistaken policy of man is sometimes more destructive than even the anger of Omnipotence."†

This is true, in a sense in which, probably, the writer did not intend the remark to be taken. Speaking of the progressive decline in prosperity of almost all the islands, which

* The Government Bank (at Cape Town) has of late discontinued the practice of accepting the mortgages of slaves. It were to be wished that the Colonial Church at the Cape would follow its example. *This interminable system of mortgaging presents the greatest barrier to emancipation.* By it, the owner's hands are tied up from doing an act of justice and mercy." Wright's Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, (1831,) p. 63, note.

† Edwards's Hist. of the W. Indies, 5th ed. vol. i. p. 513.

had, at that time, (1798,) been observable for many years, Edwards says:—

"The negroes, indeed, have been kept up, and even augmented, *by purchase,*" (the slave-trade was not then abolished,) "*because, as the lands have become impoverished, they have required a greater expense of labour to make them any way productive;* but, as the returns have not increased in the same degree, *nothing could have saved the planters from ruin, but the advanced price of sugar in the markets of Europe.*" *

In every other branch of agricultural industry, as cultivation is extended, as the produce is multiplied, from the natural effect of competition, the article is cheapened, till it approaches the lowest price at which it can be brought to market. What must be the character of that husbandry which requires an ever advancing price to meet the diminishing profits upon the produce? But hear again Bryan Edwards.

"In contrasting the profits of a West Indian plantation with those of a landed estate in Great Britain, this circumstance is commonly overlooked; yet nothing is more certain than that an English proprietor, in stating the income which he receives from his capital, includes not in his estimate the profits made by his tenants. These constitute a distinct object, and are usually reckoned equal to the clear annual rent which is paid to the proprietor. Thus a farm in England, producing an income of 3½ per cent. to the owner, is in fact proportionably equal to a sugar-plantation yielding double the profit to the planter; and possesses besides, all that stability, certainty, and security, the want of which is the great drawback on the latter. An English gentleman, when either extreme of dry or wet weather injures the crop on his lands, has no other concern in the calamity than such as the mere feelings of humanity may dictate. Nor is he under the disagreeable necessity in time of war, of paying large premiums for insuring his estate from capture by a foreign enemy. This is another tax, which the unfortunate West Indian, resident in Great Britain, must add to his expenses; or submit to the disagreeable alternative of passing many an uneasy day

* Edwards's History, vol. i. p. 510.

and sleepless night, in dreadful anxiety for the fate of his possessions, and the future subsistence of his family;—harassed perhaps, at the same time, by creditors whose importunity increases as their security becomes endangered.

"But there is a question, naturally arising from the premises, to which it is proper that I should, in this place, give an answer; and it is this: Seeing that a capital is wanted which few men can command, and considering withal, that the returns are in general but small, and at best uncertain, how has it happened that the sugar islands have been rapidly settled, and many a great estate purchased in the mother-country, from the profits that have accrued from their cultivation? It were to be wished that those who make such inquiries would inquire, on the other hand, how many unhappy persons have been totally and irretrievably ruined, by adventuring in the cultivation of these islands, without possessing any adequate means to support them in such great undertakings? On the failure of some of these unfortunate men, vast estates have indeed been raised by persons who have had money at command: men there are who, reflecting on the advantages to be derived from this circumstance, behold a sugar planter struggling in distress, with the same emotions as are felt by the Cornish peasants in contemplating a shipwreck on the coast, and hasten with equal rapaciousness to participate in the spoil. Like them too, they sometimes hold out false lights to lead the unwary adventurer to destruction; more especially if he has any thing considerable of his own to set out with. Money is advanced, and encouragement given, to a certain point; but a skilful practitioner well knows where to stop; he is aware what very large sums must be expended in the purchase of the freehold, and in the first operations of clearing and planting the lands, and erecting the buildings, before any return can be made. One-third of the money thus expended, he has perhaps furnished; but the time soon arrives when a further advance is requisite to give life and activity to the system, by the addition of the negroes and the stock. Now then is the moment for oppression, aided by the letter of the law, and the process of office, to reap a golden harvest. If the property answers expectation, and the lands promise great returns, the sagacious creditor, instead of giving further aid, or leaving his too confident debtor to make the best

of his way by his own exertions, pleads a sudden and unexpected emergency; and insists on immediate re-payment of the sum already lent. The law, on this occasion, is far from being chargeable with delay; and avarice is inexorable. A sale is hurried on, and no bidders appear but the creditor himself. Ready money is required in payment, and every one sees that a further sum will be wanting to make the estate productive. Few therefore have the means, who have even the wish, efficaciously to assist the devoted victim. Thus, the creditor gets the estate at his own price, commonly for his first advance; while the miserable debtor has reason to thank his stars if, consoling himself with only the loss of his own original capital, and his labour for a series of years, he escapes a prison for life.

"That this is no creation of the fancy, nor even an exaggerated picture, the records of the courts of law, in all or most of our islands, (Jamaica especially,) and the recollection of every inhabitant, furnish incontestable proof. At the same time it cannot justly be denied, that there are creditors, especially among the British merchants, of a different character from those that have been described, who, having advanced their money to resident planters, not in the view of deriving undue advantages from their labours and necessities, but solely on the fair and honourable ground of reciprocal benefit, have been compelled, much against their inclination, to become planters themselves; being obliged to receive unprofitable West Indian estates in payment, or lose their money altogether. I have known plantations transferred in this manner, which are a burthen instead of a benefit to the holder; and are kept up solely in the hope that favourable crops, and an advance in the prices of West Indian produce, may, some time or other, invite purchasers. Thus, oppression in one class of creditors, and gross injustice towards another, contribute equally to keep up cultivation in a country, where, if the risks and losses are great, the gains are sometimes commensurate; for sugar-estates there are, undoubtedly, from which, instead of the returns that I have estimated as the average interest on the capital, double that profit has been obtained. It is indeed true, that such instances are extremely rare; but perhaps to that very circumstance, which to a philosopher, speculating in his closet, would seem sufficient to deter a wise man from adventuring in this line of cultivation, it is

chiefly owing that so much money has been expended in it: I mean the fluctuating nature of its returns. The quality of sugar varies occasionally to so great a degree as to create a difference in its marketable value of upwards of ten shillings sterling in the hundred-weight, the whole of which is clear profit, the duties and charges being precisely the same on Muscovado sugar, of whatever quality. Thus fine sugar has been known to yield a clear profit to the planter of no less than 1,500*l.* sterling on 200 hogsheads of the usual magnitude, beyond what the same number, where the commodity is inferior in quality, would have obtained at the same market. To aver that this difference is imputable wholly to soil and seasons in the West Indies, or to the state of the British market, is to contradict common observation and experience. Much, undoubtedly, depends on skill in the manufacture; and, the process being apparently simple, the beholder (from a propensity natural to the busy and inquisitive part of mankind) feels an almost irresistible propensity to engage in it. In this, therefore, as in all other enterprises whose success depends in any degree on human sagacity and prudence, though perhaps not more than one man in fifty comes away fortunate, every sanguine adventurer takes for granted that he shall be that *one*. Thus his system of life becomes a course of experiments, and, if ruin should be the consequence of his rashness, he imputes his misfortunes to any cause, rather than to his own want of capacity or foresight."*

Needs there be added any thing to this faithful representation of the causes of the distress of the West India planter, drawn, five and thirty years ago, by their great authority and advocate? What anti-slavery writer could have painted in stronger colours the ruinous consequences of the present system? Is it wonderful, to use again the words of Edwards, that "the profits of the planter should frequently dwindle to nothing; or rather, that a sugar-estate, with all its boasted advantages, should sometimes prove a mill-stone about the neck of its unfortunate proprietor, which is dragging him to destruction?"†

* Edwards, vol. ii. pp. 301—307.

† Ibid. p. 301. As far back as the twenty years from 1772 to 1792, the

If sugar cannot be profitably grown by free labour, it is manifest, that it cannot, with profit to the planter, be produced by slave labour, except by means of bounties and protecting duties, which shall delay a little longer, and only a little longer, the inevitable catastrophe.* We speak of the cultivation of sugar, because it is chiefly for that species of husbandry that the manual labour of slaves has

Committee of the Jamaica Assembly reported, that there had been, in the course of that time, 177 estates sold for debt, and 55 thrown up; while, at the end of that period, 92 estates remained in the hands of creditors. In the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, April 13, 1832, it is remarked, that it appears from the Report of the Committee of 1807, "that during the late war, and while still supplied with slaves from Africa, *the planters complained of inadequate returns, and of unequal competition in foreign markets.* These results were then ascribed to the circumstances of the war, which has long ceased, and were necessarily independent of the causes now alleged. Your Committee are well aware that this similarity of complaint, and discrepancy of assigned reasons, have occasioned some *distrust of the accuracy of those which are now put forward.*"

"The existence of severe commercial distress," remarks Visc. Goderich, (now Earl of Ripon,) in his despatch of Nov. 5, "amongst all classes of society connected with the West Indies, is unhappily but too evident. Yet what is the just inference from this admitted fact? Not that the body should yield to despair, but that we should deliberately retrace the steps of that policy which has led to so disastrous an issue. Without denying the concurrence of many causes, it is obvious that the *great and permanent source of that distress* which almost every page of the history of the West Indies records, is to be found in *the institution of Slavery.* It is vain to hope for long-continued prosperity in any country in which the people are not dependent on their own voluntary labour for support, in which labour is not prompted by legitimate motives, and does not earn its natural reward. .... I cannot but regard *the system itself* as the perennial spring of those distresses of which, not at present merely, but during the whole of the last fifty years, the complaints have been so frequent and so just."

Lord Belmore holds similar language. On the eve of his departure from the Colony, he tells the Jamaica House of Assembly: "The cause of your present distress results from that policy by which slavery was originally established; and this fine island can never develop the abundance of its resources while slavery continues."

* The planters, in their rage against our Legislature, talk of asserting their independence. If it were worth while to expose the utter folly of this seditious and insolent threat, it would be sufficient to remark, that, supposing these islands to become independent, they could have no staple of sugar, for no country would pay the extra price which they require for their produce.

been supposed to be indispensable. If free labour can be advantageously employed in the cultivation of the cane, no one will dispute, that coffee, cotton, indigo, ginger, and other colonial produce may be grown by free labour. If wages can be substituted for the whip on a sugar-plantation, the whole question is determined.*

It will now, we hope, be thought, that we have established our first and second propositions, viz. that free labour is cheaper than slave labour, and that this general axiom does not admit of any exception in reference to the growth of sugar and other tropical produce. Sugar is grown by free labour, and at less cost than by slave labour, in Bengal, in Java, in Siam, in China, in Colombia, in Mexico: what mysterious cause, physical or moral, prevents the cultivation of this same article by free labourers in the West India islands? The sole and simple cause is, *the existence of Slavery.* This however, is denied; and the answer of the planter would probably assign as the obstacle, the supposed difficulty or uncertainty of securing free labourers. Many of them go so far as to admit, that free labour would be preferable, and even cheaper, if it could be secured; but they imagine that their control over the labour of the negroes absolutely depends upon their arbitrary property in their persons; and that no power could put in motion the living mechanism employed in cane-hole digging and other processes, but the cart-whip. We proceed then to the third branch of our inquiry.

* It is an important fact, mentioned by Mr. Cropper, that "though the American cultivation of cotton by slavery, has almost wholly superseded its growth in our colonies, and greatly checked its increase in the Brazils, yet, the Carolinians themselves have been driven out of the cultivation of indigo, in consequence of its still cheaper production by free labour in the East Indies." Review, &c. p. 20.

III.

Is it possible to secure a regular supply of free labour in the sugar colonies, in the event of abolishing the condition of slavery?

Although, in West India phraseology, a slave and a negro are synonymous terms, it is necessary that, in entering upon this branch of our inquiry, we should remind the reader, that they do not mean precisely the same thing. There is such a thing to be met with on a West India sugar-plantation, as a field slave who is very far from being, in blood and breed, a negro: though legally black, he is physically brown, sometimes closely approaching to white.* On the other hand, there is such a class as free blacks, who do in fact support themselves by their labour. The time was, when it might be disputed, whether the African could be induced to labour by the motives which are found to operate on all other species of the human race. As regards those who are already free, this can no longer be considered as problematical. That even the emancipated slaves would support themselves by their own labour, will not be doubted by any one who has the slightest knowledge of their habits, and of the very small amount of labour which would suffice to place them in comfort.†

* "I dare say it is consistent with your Lordships' knowledge, that many of the present slaves (in Jamaica) are the children of Englishmen and Scotchmen, some of them the sons of the daughters of such persons, and *some of them as white as ourselves:* they get English feelings, and they long for English knowledge, and I think they have an influence on the mass." Evid. of Rev. W. Knibb, Report of Lords' Com. p. 805. In the slave States of America, "it is often so difficult to distinguish between the fruits of mixed intercourse and the children of white parents, that witnesses are summoned at Court to solve the problem." Garrison's *Thoughts*, &c. p. 145.

† Even now, it must be recollected, the slaves chiefly support themselves by their own voluntary labour on their provision-grounds. The following statement occurs in the evidence of Robert Scott, Esq. of Trelawney, Jamaica.

"How does he maintain himself now?—By his provision-grounds, and if these fail, his master must support him, and he has his clothing from his master.

"How

" It is assumed," remarks the Archdeacon of Barbados, " that the slaves will become idle on obtaining their freedom; but *this is mere assumption.*

" The report of the privy council (1788) speaks, on the authority of witnesses from the British West India islands, of the ' invincible repugnance of the free negroes to all sorts of labour.' Messrs. Fuller, Long, and Chisholm declare, that ' free negroes are never known to work for hire, and that they have all the vices of the slaves.' Mr. Braithwaite states, that ' if the slaves in Barbados were all offered their freedom on condition of working for themselves, not one tenth of them would accept it.' Governor Parry reports, that ' free negroes are utterly destitute of industry;' and the council of the island add, that, ' from their confirmed habits of idleness they are the pests of society.'—(*Report*, 1788, *part* 3.)—Strange, that in the face of these declarations proceeding from persons in high official trust and authority, the free blacks have, by their superior industry, driven the lower order of whites from almost every trade requiring skill and continued exertion! I believe that not one in twenty of the working shoemakers in Barbados is a white man. The working carpenters, masons, tailors, smiths, &c. are for the most part men of colour; and this at a time when a large white population are in the lowest state of poverty and wretchedness. In the application for casual charity, the number of white persons soliciting relief is far greater than that of the free coloured. The free black and coloured inhabitants have always contributed in their full proportion to the parochial taxes, for the support of the poor whites; while their own poor receive no parochial relief, but are supported by private contributions among the more wealthy of their

" How many days' labour has he now to employ for himself?—His wife and children work in his provision-grounds as well as himself.

" How many days' labour of the slave himself is sufficient to provide him with enough provisions for the year?—The law allows him twenty-six days, which he still would require if he had provision-grounds; but I am assuming that he is to have no provision-grounds, according to that plan.

" Does he not now maintain himself, according to your estimate, by 35 days' labour in his grounds?—Yes.

" Does not the negro, at the present moment, by 35 days' labour, maintain himself and his wife and children with the provision-ground allotted to him by his master, independently of the allowance of fish and so on?—Yes, he does, generally speaking." (Q. 5249—5254.)

own colour. Do these facts indicate habits of irreclaimable idleness?"*

From the very facility with which the negroes could provide for their own subsistence, a difficulty, however, may seem to arise. Could they be induced to labour for wages beyond the point necessary for their own maintenance? Would the labour of those who are now slaves, if emancipated, be available to the sugar-planter?†

These are important questions, in their bearing both upon the interests of the colonies, and of the slaves themselves,‡ which require to be fairly and fully met. We shall endeavour so to meet them; first, by citing instances in which emancipated slaves have continued steadily to labour for the profit of their employer, in the West India islands; and secondly, by adducing those general considerations which warrant the reasonable expectation, that a like result of emancipation would ensue upon a larger scale. Should we but succeed in establishing the high probability of such a result, it will only remain to inquire, whether regulations of the nature of municipal police, or temporary restrictions, might not be devised, which, by coming in aid of ordinary motives, should convert that probability into certainty.

* Eliot's Christianity and Slavery, pp. 225, 6.

† "While, therefore," say the West India Proprietors in their recent circular, "it remains unascertained by actual experiment, that the negro will give continuous labour, and for reasonable wages, as a free man,—and while the weight of evidence and experience discourages the expectation of his willingly consenting to do so,—there must be the greatest danger that any hasty change of system, unaccompanied by regulations calculated to ensure the slaves becoming an industrious peasantry, and to teach the duties and obligations of civil society, would lead to the immediate destruction of the colonies, and throw the black population back into a state of barbarism."

‡ "If the slave be safe," said Mr. Borthwick, the hired champion of the West India party, (at Bath, Dec. 15, 1832,) "the planter must necessarily be safe: if the slave be perfectly free, the planter must have his compensation in that fact alone. I say, then, that Wilmot Horton declared, *the only thing the planters wanted, was not a compensation in money, but a compensation in the safety of the slave!*"—Discussion between Knibb and Borthwick, p. 20.

The first remarkable case we shall adduce, is that of Sir Charles Price, who is stated to have been in the practice of setting free the best negro he had, every birth-day, on the condition that he should continue to live with him, and continue in the same employment, and receive a certain salary all the year round. This case is mentioned in the evidence of Sir M. Clare, M.D., (a *pro*-slavery witness,) who resided, with occasional absences, 30 years in Jamaica, between 1798 and 1831, and who thinks that emancipation would lead only to vice! His reluctant admissions in the following examinations, are therefore the more striking. He is asked whether he thinks Sir Charles Price's practice was attended with a good effect? He replies:—

"It was attended with an excellent effect; none of them became licentious or idle negroes, but were imitated by every negro that could contrive to come in for the prize the next birth-day; and probably it would have gone on but for his death.

Was he a resident proprietor?—Yes.

How do you account for his example not being followed?—He was very rich, and was able to bear the expense; at the same time I should state that he found the whole of his negroes improved ultimately. After his death, his property got into debt, and they could not afford to keep it up.

According to that account he gave up nothing?—No; he actually increased his interest.

His property was advantaged?—Yes; but he lived in a very profuse way, and when he died, his affairs were found to be dilapidated, as far as that went; but as far as this operated, they were improved.

Did his debts arise from this emancipation?—I conceive not.

Perhaps you are of opinion that Sir Charles Price experienced no pecuniary loss by the course he pursued, but rather the contrary, from the improved condition and the improved industry of his other slaves?—He certainly did; there is no question about that fact.

Did not he lose the wages he paid to those men?—No; he more than gained them by the improvement of others.

Did the emancipated slaves remain on the estate?—They continued there until their wages ceased to be paid to them. They did not fall into poverty, but while they continued to keep them up in this economical way, it succeeded remarkably well.

Do you know what became of those persons on the property changing hands?—They went into the towns, and of course they were lost sight of."

Sir Charles Price died about the year 1764. Sir M. Clare is asked, whether he conceives that any good might arise to the negro, if other proprietors were to follow his example. He hopes that it would, but interposes a doubt, founded on the allegation, that the character of the negro is very much altered since then! A little further, however, he is asked to state his grounds for the opinion, that the character of the negro has retrograded, so as to render him less worthy of being entrusted now, than in the days of Sir Charles Price; and his reply is: "*The character is the same:* the only difficulty would be in his being kept under the same authority to work." He is subsequently asked, whether he ever saw a free negro work in the fields, and whether he believes that any negro, having been a slave, would, after he was freed, work in the fields. His answer is: "Never. No (free) negro will ever lay hold of a hoe; they will never touch it."* Now it is a little remarkable, that an expe-

* The objection to handling the hoe, is not founded purely on its being the badge of slavery. It is, indeed, a formidable weapon. The West India hoe is nearly the width of a small spade, and weighs about 4 lb.,—above six times the weight of the hoe used in this country. Nor is its enormous weight the only circumstance which adds to the labourer's toil. "Formerly these hoes were largely manufactured by the Sheffield edge-tool makers, and fetched good prices. Latterly, however, in reference to these implements, that town has been somewhat supplanted, in the estimation of the merchants who trade to the colonial market, by the smiths of Staffordshire, who furnish the goods on such terms as almost to preclude competition. They are wrought by means of a forge-hammer, or skelper, in the same manner as shovels; and unfortunately, like some of the latter articles, look very highly as to workmanship, when in reality they are exceedingly little worth. There ought at least to be a little steel on the edge; but they have actually,

rienced witness, examined before the Commons' Committee, when asked whether the free blacks of Antigua engage willingly in labour, replies: "Certainly, upon all occasions: it is only to hold out the hope of reward before them, and they work cheerfully." "Do they engage in field labour?" "They do not: *the proprietors would not permit them to do it, lest it should have the effect of poisoning the minds of the slaves.*"* Now, if the experiment has not been tried, (and how should it be, so long as the cart-whip is in use?) if the proprietors would forbid a free negro from labouring in the field, how could Sir M. Clare know that no free negro would ever touch a hoe? The fact is, the town negroes, whom he must refer to, are as distinct a class from the field negroes, as agricultural labourers are from artizans and mechanics in this country. Mr. Loving, of Antigua, the witness last referred to, is asked: "Do you think that, if there existed no such objection in the minds of the proprietors to their engaging in field labour, the free blacks themselves would willingly engage in it?" He replies: "No *free black at present in the towns* would go upon a plantation, and engage in agricultural pursuits, because it is to be presumed that *those free blacks in the towns are now earning their living in some industrious way, not so laborious as field labour.* But, whether the slaves, if emancipated, would still go on with the cultivation of the soil, *is another question.*"†

for the sake of cheapness, been ordered and manufactured entirely of iron! The implements are unwieldy enough at best, and such as few persons in this country would like to be compelled to use, day after day, under a vertical sun; there was little need, therefore, to deteriorate the efficiency of the hoe, *or rather to deprive it of its edge altogether.* But, in tools designed to be used by persons whose time and labour are accounted of no great value, and whose comfort is rated still lower, excellency of material and superiority of workmanship weigh nothing in the scale against cheapness and cupidity."—Lardner's Cyclopedia. Manufactures in Metal. Vol. i., p. 143.

* Report of Commons' Committee, Q. 1956, 1958.

† Ibid. Q. 1959.

A little further on, this witness bears testimony to another most important fact.

"In point of fact, is the free black man in the towns, so far as regards the possession of the means of livelihood and the actual comforts of life, in a better condition than the slaves, speaking generally?—Assuredly, because he can earn as much in one day, as the slave gets from his master in one week for his allowance.

"In point of fact, does the free black person possess greater means of subsistence, and has he more of the actual comforts of life, than the slave upon an estate?—He has in every respect; and a reference to the case of the African apprentices lately emancipated, would prove that.

"Will you state what you know of the case of the emancipated apprentices?—In 1828, there were 371 captured negroes, and 36 creole escheated slaves, liberated from further dependence on the Crown in the island of Antigua. I think the conduct of these people, since their liberation, a fair proof by which to ascertain the fitness of any colonial slaves for speedy emancipation. With the solitary exception of a case of petit larceny, no others of their whole number have been guilty of any breach of the laws of the island down to the period when I left it; that was in July last, and they were pursuing an industrious course for their own support. Some of these Africans were employed by me from time to time as hodmen, while others, both male and female, lived in my immediate neighbourhood; and this gave me an opportunity of discovering personally their industry, the avidity with which they coveted the possession of money and other property, their love of fine clothes, and the desire of copying, as close as possible, the dress, manners, and speech of the creoles; and in some instances, they have succeeded in gaining the advantage of the natives in these several respects. With reference to their industry, it is notorious, that most of the laborious work in the town of St. John is performed by them. Several employ themselves as fishermen, some as mariners and bargemen; others as hodmen, porters, and house servants, and in fact all kinds of labour except agricultural; that branch of industry having been forbidden while they were under the control of the collector of His Majesty's Customs,

according to the terms of the indentures by which they were bound to several persons; and moreover, their services were never sought after by the planters, as agricultural labourers, since the period when they were liberated, because I conceive that no planter could be brought to hazard the employing of free men as labourers on the soil among the slaves of his plantation, from the fear that they would inject into the minds of the slaves, notions of liberty, which would be incompatible with the interests of their owners. Many of the women have become active hucksters and venders of dry goods and provisions in the markets; some are house-maids, some laundresses, and others drudges. But the most remarkable facts are, that not fewer than 5 per cent. have purchased their own houses, including three freeholds; and of the 371 who received their certificates of liberation, only one man and five women have returned upon the bounty of the Crown, and even these were obliged to do so by medical advice, because they were decrepit and unfit for labour.

" Have you yourself authenticated these facts?—I have. At the time that these people were set at liberty, there were not a few persons in the island who believed that they would become burthensome to the community. It was considered that, being Africans, not many years from their native wilds, and not being equally well informed with the creoles, nor possessing generally an equal knowledge of right and wrong, when thrown upon their own hands after several years' maintenance by the Government, they would be reduced to a state of mendicity and wretchedness, and become a tax upon the public; but these fearful anticipations were soon succeeded by an assurance that they were totally groundless. Notwithstanding their general quiet conduct, for a period of two years and a half after their liberation, I would not attempt to say that there are not some of bad principles among them. In fact, I have heard said, that there were such; but it would be strange indeed, if, among so many persons, there should be found none that were free from blame. Perhaps, after all, their greatest crime may be found under the denomination of insolence; but those who make this charge, pay very little attention to the circumstance that these Africans have not forgot their native freedom, and that they have penetration enough to discern that they cannot be insulted,

in the manner that a slave is, with impunity. During their apprenticeship, some of their masters and mistresses desired to exercise the same control over them as they would over slaves; but, as this was forbidden by the terms of their indentures, and resisted by the apprentices themselves, it left an incurable rankling in the minds of the defeated party.

"Were they all, to a certain degree, educated?—I cannot say that; but even the worst of them were sufficiently enlightened to know that they ought to conduct themselves as good members of society; and hence those results have followed, that, since the period of their liberation up to the time I came to England, there was not one of them, with the exception of one for petit larceny, that had been convicted before any court.

"Do not you consider that their orderly conduct and their good behaviour since their emancipation is much to be ascribed to the discipline which their minds and characters have received through education and religious instruction; and suppose, for instance, the same number of persons without the advantages of any religious instruction had been so emancipated, would you have expected the same good results from it?—No.

"Was their religious instruction and their knowledge generally superior to that possessed by the slaves in the island of Antigua?—By no means."*

The case of the free blacks of Trinidad may next be cited. In September, 1816, a number of American blacks (632), who had taken refuge with the British forces during the war, were brought to Trinidad, and located there; and in the following year, 63 female prize negroes, taken in slave-ships, were added to their number. In January, 1821, 79 more refugee American slaves joined the settlement, which now consisted of 774 individuals. Notwithstanding the great disparity of the sexes, (for no other addition was made to the settlement from any other source,) at the close of 1825, their numbers had risen to 923, being an increase of 20 per cent. in eight years, or 2½ per cent. per annum. The following account of their condition is taken from Parliamentary documents.

* Commons' Report, Q. 1986—9; 1994—6.

" Mr. Mitchell, their superintendent, states, that they labour very industriously in their own grounds, and maintain themselves and their families in comfort, being persons of peaceable and domestic habits, and of moral and religious lives. They are also, as he testifies, perfectly willing, at least the men among them, to hire themselves to labour in plantation-work on sugar-estates, at reasonable rates, chiefly by the piece, and that the labour they undertake to perform is generally well executed.

" Sir Ralph Woodford, the governor, had put the question to Mr. Mitchell, ' Whether sugar-estates could be carried on entirely by free labour?' Mr. Mitchell is of opinion, that the main obstacle to their doing so arises from the necessity under which sugar-planters consider themselves to be placed, of causing their labourers to work in the manufacture of sugar for six hours of the night, as well as for twelve hours of the day. In a letter dated 27th June 1823, he thus writes in reply to the governor:—' I do not think they could,' (that is, I do not think that sugar-estates could be carried on *entirely* by free labour,) ' in the manner the work is carried on at present.' He then describes what that manner is—planters ' making large quantities of sugar in a given time, in many instances working eighteen out of twenty-four hours; which constant labour the free settlers, whose circumstances render them independent, will not submit to.' But then he is of opinion, that even while that formidable obstacle remains to deter the free from engaging in *all* the same kinds of plantation-labour with the slave, and therefore from carrying on sugar-estates *entirely, as things are now conducted,* ' estates may be and are greatly assisted by them; and in many instances within my own knowledge, the canes are planted and cut down, while the staves, hoops, and heading are split by them. And were the free population greater, I have no doubt that sugar-estates carrying on labour from sunrise to sunset might be worked by them, while the planter would receive moderate indemnification from his outlay.'—No. 479 of 1827, p. 33.

" In his examination before the Committee, he enters into some details on this subject. Reducing the measure of land, and also of the value of the currency, to the British standard, he gives, at p. 5, the rates at which they are usually willing to

labour on plantations by contract, executing well the work they undertake to perform, viz.—

	£.	s.	d.
Cutting Ratoon canes, by the acre	2	10	0
Cutting plant canes, by the acre	3	12	0
Planting canes, ditto.....15*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* to	18	15	0
Felling high woods, ditto	2	10	0
Cutting wood, by the cord.....2*s.* 8*d.* to	0	3	2

At these rates, he thinks, they may earn at the rate of 4*s.* sterling a day.

" The examinations of the Committee of the Council of Trinidad appear to have extended to other emancipated persons besides the refugee slaves from the United States. Mr. Mitchell admitted, that none of the slaves who had been manumitted in Trinidad would consent to work as field labourers, as the slaves do. He bore his testimony, however, to the general industry of these manumitted slaves. Those of them who do not cultivate their own grounds as free settlers, which many of them do, work as journeymen tradesmen. He had never known a manumitted slave who had not been able to maintain himself when free. This evidence was confirmed by Mr. Lamont.—No. 479 of 1827, pp. 33, 34, and 45.

" But this is not the only Parliamentary Paper which may be adduced in proof of the position, that the manumitted slaves of Trinidad, and their descendants, are fully competent to support themselves, and are a loyal and peaceable, as well as an industrious people.

" A motion was made in the House of Commons, on the 6th of June, 1825, for a return of ' the sums raised for the support of the poor in Trinidad,' since the 1st of January 1821; and of the number and names of the persons receiving relief, distinguishing the white from the free black and coloured paupers. A return was made to this order, and printed by order of the House of Commons, on the 9th of May 1826, No. 353. It is as follows: That no sums appear to have been raised in that Colony for the relief of the Poor. Certified by H. P. Hill, Treasurer of the Colony.

" There is also a paper, laid on the table of the House of Commons on the 12th of June 1829, No. 336, purporting to be a return of Mr. Hodgkinson, the Commissary of Population, con-

taining an account of the labourers born free, and of the manumitted slaves, their property, and character, domiciled in Trinidad in 1824. This paper gives an account of 2,080 families of the labouring class, all of whom, with scarcely an exception, appear to obtain a very adequate subsistence, either by labouring on land of their own, or by hiring themselves out, either as domestics or mechanics, or by carrying on petty traffic; and not one word is said as if any of them were suffering from want, or were living by pillage, or were in the habit of disturbing the public peace. Nothing has since transpired to invalidate in the slightest degree the integrity of this return.

"In 1825, the number of the free black and coloured population of Trinidad, including the Indians, was about 15,150; more than five times the number of the white inhabitants. How many may have been added to that number in the six or seven years which have since elapsed, has not been any where officially stated; but, assuming them to have proceeded at their previous rate of increase, the number of them on the 31st of December, 1831, cannot have fallen much short, if the manumissions are included, of 18,500. What proportion of this body may be considered as in the class of labourers, it may be difficult to conjecture; probably two-thirds of them are of that class, the remainder being of somewhat superior grades. Of these, indeed, many are known to be persons of very considerable wealth, intelligence, and respectability. Half the property of the Island is supposed to be in their hands; and of their loyal and peaceable demeanour no doubt has ever been expressed, or can be entertained."*

Another remarkable instance is mentioned by the Rev. W. S. Austin, in his evidence before the Commons' Committee. (Q. 2272, 3; 2290, 1.)

" Have you seen in the slaves a considerable desire to possess extra comforts?—I have. I beg leave to mention particularly two settlements of emancipated slaves in the colony of Surinam; they were emancipated, I believe, by violence in the first instance; they emancipated themselves. I was for several years, but especially more particularly and constantly for about a year and a half, in the habit of trafficking with them: their employment was, to bring down timber from the interior of the coun-

* Lords' Report, pp. 939, 940.

try, which they had hewn, and sometimes sawed into planks and other things, and bartering them for rum, sugar, and any thing else; they also brought surplus provisions, sometimes rice and yams, and various other things, and they accumulated considerable property for persons in their situation. I had, for instance, 10*l.* at a time of one man, in my own possession, keeping for him. A very intimate friend of mine, a physician and a planter, has told me, that he has had deposited with him to the amount of 300*l.* belonging to different individuals among these said negroes, for articles disposed of to him and to others.

" Was it the produce of regular labour?—Not having lived among them, I cannot say whether it was the produce of regular daily labour, but it was of very hard labour, much more so than the cultivation of sugar.

" Are those freed negroes generally drunken or sober in their habits?—Mine will be an extraordinary testimony in this respect, because, notwithstanding my intimate acquaintance with them for several years, I can most positively assert, that (though I have heard of such a thing) I never saw one of them in the slightest degree disguised in liquor. I consider them the most moral, in most of their habits, of any order of negroes I have ever met with.

" What species of cultivation did they carry on?—Rice and provisions of various kinds; and they hew down a large quantity of hard timber, saw it into planks and pieces of wood for other purposes, which they bring to town to exchange with the whites for comforts and luxuries."

The remarkable case of Count Tovar's slaves, mentioned by Baron Humboldt, has already been cited. But, in no colony where slavery still exists, has the experiment of emancipation been tried on so large a scale as in the island of Cuba. " In no part of the world," says Humboldt, " where slavery prevails, is emancipation so frequent. The Spanish legislature, far from preventing this, or rendering it difficult, like the English and French legislatures, favours liberty. The right of every slave to change his master, or to set himself free, if he can repay the price of the purchase; the religious feeling which inspires many masters

in easy circumstances with the idea of giving liberty, by their will, to a certain number of slaves; the habit of keeping a multitude of blacks for domestic purposes; the attachments which arise from this intercourse with the whites; *the facility with which slaves make money who are mechanics, and who pay their masters a certain sum daily, in order to work on their own account*;—such are the principal causes from which so many slaves in the towns pass from the captive state to that of free-men of colour.... The condition of free-men of colour is happier at the Havannah, than among nations which boast, during ages, of the most advanced civilization. Here, those barbarous laws are unknown, according to which free-men, incapable of receiving the donations of the whites, may be deprived of their liberty, and sold for the profit of the fiscal, if they are convicted of having afforded an asylum to Maroon negroes." *

With regard to the actual state of things in Cuba, the following information is given in the evidence of Vice-Admiral the Hon. Charles Elphinstone Fleeming, before the Commons' Committee.

"Have you seen a good deal of the people of colour in Cuba?—Yes.

"What did their condition appear to be?—They are in good condition; some of the brown people are very rich people; some of the blacks, too, are very wealthy people.

"What is the condition of the lower class of free people?—All the free people are in very good condition in the island of Cuba.

"Have you ever heard or seen any thing in Cuba which would lead you to believe that the free people of colour were not industrious?—No, I never heard in Cuba any complaints of their want of industry; I think they are generally as industrious as the Spaniards.

"Did you ever know or hear of any instance of free persons of colour being employed in the cultivation of sugar in Cuba?—

* Humboldt's Pers. Narr. Vol. VII. pp. 127, 8.

Yes, a great many; I have seen white people employed in Cuba, the people that came from the Canary islands, in field work, and they manage all the indigo.

" Do you suppose that any of the free persons of colour made cane-holes?—Yes; I have seen the free people making cane-holes, and some of them work the whole estate without slaves.

" Are there instances of small sugar estates working entirely without slaves?—Yes; they grow the cane, and sell it to persons who boil it.

" What is the total number of free persons that work upon sugar estates, to your knowledge, in the island of Cuba?— I had no means of ascertaining that, but there was a great number; they hire them when they have not enough.

" Is there any difficulty in getting them?—No, I never heard of any difficulty.

" Do you know what the rate of wages is?—It is very high for working on a sugar plantation; a free person will gain two pisettas a day; that is about eighteen-pence, or more than that; in that country it will be more than half a dollar.

" Are the wages usually paid in coin?—In coin generally, but they sometimes pay them in goods.

" When you speak of their selling the canes, do you mean that that is the general practice on the part of the persons of colour?—Some free persons manufacture their own sugar, but, as the boilers are expensive, they generally sell them to a richer person in the neighbourhood.

" The produce of the raw material they give to a capitalist to be manufactured?—Yes, and I have heard that they sometimes get a part of it back manufactured.

" What may be the extent of any of the estates of the persons that sell the canes in that way?—It is difficult to say.

" Are they like the estates in our own colonies?—They are better land. I knew one man that had thirty fanagas of cane. A fanaga corresponds to about an acre and a half.

" Was it wrought by free labour?—Entirely wrought by free labour.

" Was the process upon that estate exactly the same as upon a slave-cultivated sugar estate, cane-hole digging, and all the process of culture the same?—Yes; all except the boiling.

" What is the largest estate you have known cultivated by free labour?—I suppose that is the largest I have known.

" That was about 45 acres?—Yes, in that one piece; but he had other land besides that. The estates in Cuba are much more extensive than in Jamaica, and sometimes pieces are let off to free negroes.

" Was that estate entirely cultivated by free labour?—Entirely; I was told the slaves had all been sold.

" Are you aware of the number of free labourers employed upon that estate?—I should suppose there were upwards of 300 people upon it; they were all hutted.

" Were they all receiving about the same rate of wages you have mentioned?—Yes; some received more.

" Among the Creole slaves in Cuba, does discontent exist in the same degree as there exists in Jamaica?—No; there is very little discontent among the slaves in Cuba, because they have it in their power to apply for legal manumission, or, as it is called in the English islands, compulsory manumission; they are all valued, and whenever they make up their price, they may free themselves if they please, or their children or their wives. They work by piece-work; they are not driven generally, although some of the estates in the possession of the English and Americans do drive, but I never saw a Spanish estate drive.

" Are the Committee to understand, then, that freedom is not placed beyond the hopes or the means of acquirement of any slave in the island of Cuba?—No; freedom is not beyond the hopes of every slave in Cuba; and they may change their masters whenever they please, if they can find another who will give the price; this is frequently done.

" Are you not of opinion, that having extra time for work, which, when performed with diligence, may purchase their freedom, and having always the hope of freedom before them, it is natural that they should be more contented with their situation than the slaves in Jamaica, who work harder and have no such hope?—Yes, entirely; but I do not speak alone of Cuba, because the Carraccas is just in the same situation. I was some months in the Carraccas, where the greater part of them are free people.

" Does the task-work prevail on sugar estates in Cuba?—Yes, on the sugar estates likewise, and so it does in the Carraccas.

" Free labour being considered by many of the Spaniards cheaper than slave labour, how do you account for the desire that has been evinced by the Spaniards to import so largely into Cuba?—The desire to import Africans is not by the Spaniards; it is chiefly by the adventurers that come to the island, and by the expelled people from South America.

" Are there not continual supplies of newly imported Africans brought upon the estates possessed by the Spanish proprietors? —No, I do not think it is general; I know many proprietors in Cuba that will not purchase an African.

" What becomes of the great number of Africans imported, as appears from the different papers, into Cuba?—They are employed generally on the new estates, and some old proprietors purchase them, but rarely.

" Do you suppose there would be any greater difficulty in adopting the system of free labour upon the sugar estates in the English islands, than in the Spanish islands?—Yes, a great deal.

" Will you explain why?—Because all the English inhabitants that ever I was acquainted with are against free labour, and consequently they would resist it.

" Independently of the opinion that may be entertained by planters in the British West India colonies, is there in the thing itself any greater difficulty in the English West India islands than in Cuba?—I think none. I am of opinion that the West Indies could be cultivated by free labour; and I ground that opinion upon my experience of what I have seen in Hayti, in the Carraccas, particularly where all are free, and in the islands of Trinidad and Cuba, and upon the industry of the free negroes in the islands of the Bahamas.

" What proportion do those whom you know or have understood to work in the field, bear to the mass of the slave population employed in field labour in Cuba?—Upon the sugar estates, the proportion of free labour is much less than that of the slaves; but in the cultivation of the interior, where corn is grown and cattle bred, the free labour exceeds the slaves.

" It being a nicely balanced question in Cuba between the comparative profit of slave labour and free labour, are you of opinion, that if a royal ordinance was to go forth from Spain, liberating all the slaves in Cuba, the cultivation of sugar would cease in that island, and that confusion would ensue?—No; I have not the least doubt that not the least confusion would ensue.

" Are you of opinion that many sugar plantations would be thrown out of cultivation?—Not one in Cuba; there is no dislike to employ free people in the island of Cuba, but there is in all the English islands.

" Will you state whether the mixed state of emancipation and partial emancipation in the Carraccas produced perceptibly any confusion or disorder among the black population?—During the three different times that I visited the Carraccas, I never saw any disorder, and I never heard of any, except such as was occasioned by political convulsions.

" Upon general principles, or upon the score of profit?—Upon the score of profit; the Marquis del Toro, a cousin of Bolivar, who has immense estates there, and had a great number of slaves, worked them all by free labour.

" You were understood to say, that you knew of your own knowledge, that slaves and free blacks worked together upon sugar plantations?—Yes, I have seen it in the Carraccas.

" And therefore they continue the labour on sugar plantations freely and voluntarily?—Yes, freely and voluntarily.

" Since the emancipation of the slaves under Bolivar's order, has the cultivation of sugar in the provinces of the Carraccas and Margarita increased or diminished?—It has increased; I have every reason to believe so, and I was told so; I never heard it contradicted. I know many estates that had not been cultivated previously, have been cultivated as sugar estates of late years, in the low part of the country.

" Can you state at all the number of people employed in the sugar estates in the Carraccas?—No, I cannot; it is an immense country.

" What is the proportion of slaves there to the free population?—The free population exceeds the slaves very much.

" At the time emancipation was declared, what was the proportion?—At that time, perhaps, the white and coloured people, free, would be about equal to the slaves; in Cuba, the white population is superior, but in the Carraccas, it was about equal.

" Putting the fears of the planters aside, should you have any apprehension about adopting the same system of emancipation in the British West Indies, which has been adopted in the Carraccas?—No; before the late insurrection in Jamaica, I should have had no fear of the success of such a measure. I doubt it now, because the slaves must be in some degree inured to blood-

shed, and revengeful feelings must exist from what has taken place; and therefore I consider it much more dangerous, though more necessary." * * *

"Supposing the slaves to be emancipated generally, do you believe they would be capable of maintaining themselves by their own labour?—Yes, I think they would, certainly; and, judging from what I have seen in Cuba, Curaçoa, Bahamas, and Trinidad, able to cultivate the land as well as it is now.

"Did you observe, upon the whole, that they were industrious in their habits, or otherwise?—The slaves are not industrious, unless when they work for themselves; but when they work for themselves upon the Saturdays that they have, and the Sundays, they are very industrious in cultivating their own lands. I have had slaves who worked for hire afterwards most industriously.

"When they work for the benefit of their master under compulsion, they are not so industrious as when they work for their own benefit?—Certainly not; it has always appeared to me, that slaves worked in a gang, and under overseers, did as little as they could avoid doing, but by hire, work as much as they could do."*

We have not yet adverted to Hayti, respecting which so much misrepresentation has been industriously propagated, with a view to evade the otherwise irresistible conclusion to be deduced from the social results of emancipation there. We shall simply transcribe the following statements from the evidence laid before the Commons' Committee.

Admiral Fleming.—"At what intervals did you visit Hayti?—I was first at St. Domingo in 1797; and the last time I was in the West Indies, I was twice there, in 1828 and 1829.

"What was the condition of the black population in Hayti, as it appeared to you in 1828, when they were liberated, contrasted with what it was in 1797?—In 1797, the country was at war; the negroes were almost all in insurrection, and, therefore, I could not draw any comparison; but, from the year 1828 to the year 1829, they had been tranquil all the time, and their condition appeared to be improved.

"What appeared to be the condition of the black population

* Commons' Report. Q. 2547—2568; 2577, 8; 2594; 2600; 2612—14; 2636—2641; 2647—2656; 2674—8; 2693—6; 2711; 2438—2440.

in 1828, compared with the condition of the slave population in Jamaica at that time? which possessed most of the comforts of life, as far as you were able to judge?—I think in Hayti they possessed more of the comforts of life; they were better dressed.

"Did you see much begging in the streets?—I never saw a beggar in Hayti.

"Did you see any sugar cultivated in Hayti?—Yes, I saw one estate only.

"Near which town?—Near the Cape.

"Was it extensive?—Yes, it was a very fine estate; it belonged to a general (General Bourlon I think it was), extremely well cultivated and in beautiful order.

"Did the land appear to you to be as clean and well managed as any thing you had seen in Jamaica?—Yes; beautifully laid out, and with fine roads, and as well managed as any estate I saw in the West Indies.

"Did you inquire of any person who knew the state of the interior of Hayti, whether what you saw was a fair specimen of the general state of the island, or whether the immediate neighbourhood of the Cape was superior to the interior of the island?—I was told it was inferior, because the land is not so good.

"Do you mean to say that there are many sugar estates in the interior?—No, I believe very few; they export no sugar; there is very little sugar made.

"Do they import any sugar in Hayti?—Not that I know of; I believe they may import. The cultivation of canes is not encouraged in Hayti; they had no means of making it into sugar, nor any capital to set up the works.

"Have you ever heard the reason assigned for the decrease of the growth of sugar in Hayti, by any person upon whose judgment you could rely there?—Yes.

"What were the causes stated to you?—The destruction of the works, and the want of capital to establish them again; and the necessity of attending to other more urgent concerns, feeding themselves and making clothes; besides, the Government do not encourage making sugar, to avoid giving offence to the sugar colonies.

"Did you ever hear the unwillingness of the free black population to work at the cultivation of sugar, assigned as a reason?—Never; on the contrary, I was told that they were very ready to work if they were paid.

" Did you ever hear the necessary rate of wages of free labour, as compared with the lower cost of production in the maintenance of slaves, assigned as a reason why sugar could not be profitably cultivated in Hayti?—Never; on the contrary, many Europeans settled in St. Domingo have told me, that they thought they could make sugar cheaper in Hayti, with free labour, than with slave labour in our colonies, but the Government do not encourage it." (Q. 2738—2741; 2744—6; 2779—2786.)

*Mr. Robert Sutherland.**—" Does Hayti afford an example of a free black population working for wages?—I think it does.

" You were understood to say, that they all possessed land of their own, and that they worked upon that land; and that you had understood from the large proprietors, that there was great difficulty in their obtaining labourers for hire: if that be so, does it not fail to afford an example of free labour for hire? —No, it does not; there are some who have no lands, and who are located upon the plantations, of which there are a great many. The Agrarian law only extends to the more intelligent part of the population. Land was allotted to almost all the old soldiers, who were of sufficient intelligence to become proprietors and to cultivate the soil; and I believe there was an article of that very Agrarian law, which stated, that if the land, or so much of it, was not cultivated at a certain period, it was forfeited.

" Are there many persons who work for hire in Hayti?—Yes, the whole cultivation is carried on by free labour.

" Do those persons work with industry and vigour?—I have no reason to think that they do not. The proof that free labour in Hayti answers, is this; that after the French were expelled, there was absolutely no sugar-work, there was no mill; there was nothing of that kind which could be put in use, it was so destroyed; and since that period, various plantations have grown up in Hayti; men have gone to the expense of laying out twenty, thirty, and forty thousand dollars to build up those sugar-works, and there are a vast number of plantations in the island; and it stands to reason, that, unless those men were repaid for their capital, they would not continue that sort of work. And there is another thing to be observed, that sugar is not the staple commodity of Hayti; they only make sufficient for consumption: coffee is the staple commodity of the island.

* This gentleman visited Hayti four times between 1814 and 1827.

"Have you heard complaints generally as to the industry of those who were employed in free labour?—I have heard the great proprietors frequently complain of the great difficulty of obtaining labourers, but those were men who were accustomed to the old colonial practice; their complaint was, not that those that did work were inefficient, but they complained of the difficulty of getting a sufficient number to cultivate.

"Have you seen any of the negroes at work on sugar estates? —Yes, on several plantations." (Q. 2947—2952.)

We must not omit to notice the satisfactory results of emancipation in the Cape Colony. In 1826, 7, between two and three hundred slaves of all ages and sexes, belonging to private individuals, and one hundred and twenty belonging to Government, were manumitted; the latter in one day. About 1500 prize negroes* also, of both sexes, "the majority of whom had been for fourteen years made to drink of the bitter cup of slavery to the dregs, were admitted to enjoy the blessings of liberty; and experience has shewn that this event was attended with advantage to themselves and to the community."† "Many of these people," it is remarked in a colonial journal, "who had made but little progress in the acquisition of industrious habits during their period of servitude, have improved rapidly in this respect on obtaining their emancipation, and turned out not only more obedient, but *more profitable to their employers as servants, than they had been to their masters as apprentices.*"‡ This fact may well seem to warrant the statements made by Mr. Miller, Colonial Aide-de-Camp to Sir Lowry Cole, and Acting Clerk to the Council, in his "Considerations on the Exact Position of the Slave Question." "Suppose,"

* Negroes found on board captured slave ships, and brought to the colony, to be apprenticed under an act of Parliament for a term not exceeding 14 years. In some cases, they were detained in bondage fifteen years; and at the expiration of their (so called) apprenticeship, a plan was formed to keep their children in slavery, to *compensate* the masters!

† "Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope." By the Rev. William Wright, M. A., of Trinity College, Dublin, Chaplain at Bathurst, &c., 8vo. 1831. p. 62.

‡ South African Commercial Advertiser. May 10, 1826.

says this gentleman, " that emancipation were declared to-morrow, and that Slavery were to cease forthwith, as long as a sufficient quantity of free labour can be procured at an expense equivalent to that incurred by the slave labour, the master will suffer no loss by the change. For wherein consists the value of the slave, but in the value of his labour? Now, I affirm that free labour is procurable in the colony at the lowest possible price; for, at the moment in which I write, there are thousands and tens of thousands of natives in the frontiers, who are in a state of absolute starvation, and who are coming into the colony in such numbers to seek labour, at any wages, that the farmers in those districts are obliged to send them back.....The introduction of free labourers, although it would lower the exchangeable value of the slave, would not lessen the profits of the master. On the contrary, the quantity of labour being increased, there would be a corresponding increase in the value and profits of the land."*

There is another class of facts tending to establish the reasonable probability that the slaves in our colonies, if emancipated from the whip, would work for wages; we refer to the good effect with which task-work has been introduced into the plantations. We find this enumerated among the improvements for which the West Indians take credit to themselves; and since it has become more common, the negroes, we are told, are become more healthy and cheerful. Upon this point, the following evidence was given in before the Committee of the House of Commons.

Wm. Taylor, Esq.—" Is it not then the fact, that by means of giving them wages, you would get from them the greatest quantity of work that their physical strength was able to perform?—Certainly; I found that by giving them task-work, and then by paying them for extra work, I got much more work done, and it was cheerfully done.

* Cited by Mr. Wright. p. 70.

" What is the greatest number you ever employed for hire?—The greatest number was in the case of the fence; there was first one employed, and then two or three more, and so on.

" Were there as many as twenty altogether?—Not twenty, I should think.

" On how many occasions did you ever employ people in this way?—Only in the case of the fence, and in the case of digging cane-holes, and in the case of working in the garden.

" Have you reason to believe that if you had wished to employ persons in this way on other occasions, and to a greater extent, you could have done so?—If it was for their pecuniary benefit; if they found that it was the most profitable mode of employing themselves.

" Did you ever attempt to hire people to do work in this way and fail in the attempt?—I would say generally, that I found them willing to work, in their extra time, for hire.

" Are you speaking of any other negroes besides those on Mr. Wildman's estate?—No.

" If it was found so advantageous in this particular instance, why was it not more generally adopted on the estate?—Task-work is generally preferred.

" In the case of the cane-hole digging, would it not answer for the planter to give the men extra work upon the system you have described?—It is too expensive; such is the unavoidable expense of conducting estates now, that a mixed system of slavery and free labour would not do; they could not maintain men at the expense of slavery, and work them half a day as slaves, and pay them the other half day as free men. With me it was an experiment; but the task-work was very generally used; and I have heard planters always say, that the negro got his work done in a much shorter time, and I have often heard overseers say, that they always resorted to task-work." (Q. 104—112.)*

Robert Scott, Esq.—" Were you in the habit of employing any of your slaves upon task-work?—Sometimes; in digging cane-holes, for instance, the overseer would give them task-work.

" Have you found that they performed that task-work with greater expedition than they would do the same quantity of work at day labour?—Certainly; they generally finished the

* See also Lords' Report, pp. 585—6; 621, 622.

task-work by two o'clock in the afternoon, by working at their dinner time.

"To what did they betake themselves after that during the rest of the day?—They often went to their grounds or to their gardens.

"Did it ever happen to you upon any estate, to offer the negroes any small compensation for additional labour?—I dare say it has, though I cannot call any instance to my recollection at this moment; I know that negroes are frequently paid for their extra labour.

"Do not they work willingly then?—Certainly they do." (Q. 5076—8; 5261, 2.)

The following statements occur in the Evidence before the Lords' Committee.

John Baillie, Esq.—"Suppose a man to take his task, what proportion of time would he be able to finish his time in, he doing it voluntarily, as compared with the number of hours a slave would be employed? I have seen a negro gain a couple of hours in a day by task-work; that has been an able bodied negro."

Mr. Edm. Sharp.—"Have you ever worked the negroes under your care at task-work?—Frequently.

"Have you worked them on cane-hole-digging?—Cane-hole-digging is generally by task-work, where we can get it done; he does his day's work, and is at liberty to go where he pleases afterwards.

"Have you ever done it in clearing of canes?—That is work of that nature that we can scarcely give task-work in it.

"Have you given any other description of work?—Various other works in the trades; stone wall-building, and the cooperage.

"When you have put the slaves to task-work in respect to cane-hole-digging, have you not found that they have done the work at an early time in the day, so as to be able to get a portion of the remainder?—Yes, they have done their task-work by two or three o'clock; then they would work the two hours at noon to get that.

"Do you draw any conclusion from that circumstance, that the negro, if paid for his work in wages, would be prompted to regular and continuous industry?—I think a free man would not, under any consideration, labour in the field.

"What reason can you assign for his performing the task-

work so expeditiously as to be enabled to get the remainder of the day?—Knowing there is a boon to him for the remainder of the day, of course he works harder." *

Evidence still more decisive, perhaps, is furnished by Mr. Telfair, the proprietor of the Bel-Ombre estate in the Mauritius, a decided opponent of the Anti-Slavery Society. In his "Account of the State of Slavery at Mauritius in 1810, in Refutation of anonymous Charges against that Colony," Mr. Telfair describes the results of an experiment which he was induced to make as a colonial proprietor on his estate on that island. "The whole establishment," he says, "was under my control; and the problem I undertook experimentally to solve, for the general interest of the population, bond and free, was, that the produce of the estate would be augmented, and the state of both these classes meliorated, *in proportion as the land was cultivated* to the best advantage by machinery and agricultural implements, *with the greatest number of working cattle and the smallest number of slaves.* Thus, then, our chief object was, to adapt the most perfect system of European husbandry to tropical cultivation; and, while multiplying our produce, by these means to raise the slaves to the physical and moral level of English farm servants."

In proceeding to describe the manner in which this purpose was followed up, he states, that "*The adoption of tasks*, whenever practicable, *augmented the amount of work performed*, and simplified the duties of the overseer, who had only to see that the task was done in a workman-like manner. Many of the more handy negroes could perform their portion before four o'clock, and some even before two p. m. *Such individuals never required correction: their industry kept them from rioting and quarrelling.* Disorderly individuals alone, who, from caprice, indulgence in strong liquors, or jealousy, would neither work nor suffer their companions to work, or who behaved with cruelty to

* Lords' Report, pp. 47; 788.

the working cattle,—required. and that but seldom, *the intervention of justice on the field.*".....“ The only certain means,” continues Mr Telfair, by which a master can influence the conduct of his servants, are punishments and rewards. *Experience confirmed my anticipation of the superiority of the latter;* and in this view, every thing we could imagine was done to excite the emulation of the blacks, particularly by public trials of skill in ploughing, reaping, mowing, sowing, &c. And we were satisfied that the greatest ardour and energy were produced by the system of remuneration. *A man actuated by the hope of reward, labours cheerfully, and finds that he possesses powers of which he was not before aware.*” *

In the “Notes extracted from the Bel-Ombre Instructions Book, 1817,” given in the Appendix to Mr. Telfair's volume, we find the following propositions laid down by this gentleman. “ It is easy to perceive, that the fear of chastisement, hitherto considered almost the only motive of a black's exertion, is little calculated to call forth all the industry he is capable of exerting. Fear engages him to conceal, rather than to shew the extent of his corporal powers; and all the labour he can elude, is by him considered positive gain.....Slavery has existed in all countries. It still exists in many European nations; but it is gradually superseded by freedom in the progress of civilization; *because hired work has been found more profitable to the employer, than the labour of slaves.*” † Another beneficial distinction has arisen from the progress of modern observations and activity. What was once universally prevalent, *viz.* labour by the day, as far as the nature of the employ-

* Telfair's State of Slavery, &c. pp. 25, 29, 30.

† The following additional proof of this fact, is furnished by Mr. Miller, in his work above referred to. “ In the Island of Bourbon, the proprietors of sugar-estates, finding the want of labour since the abolition of the slave-trade, have had recourse to a scheme for procuring free labour, and that, too, at considerable expense. An agent is employed on the coast of Malabar,

ment admits, is now done by task-work. Even in agriculture, (in which, in many respects, task-work is generally accompanied with difficulty,) every favourable occasion is to be taken for introducing task-work, which is, when applicable, productive of benefit to the planter and comfort to the labourer, who executes his share with alacrity and pleasure."*

Task-work, Mr. Hodgson found to be almost universal in the Atlantic States of America, where tobacco, cotton, and rice are the staple articles of production; but he "never heard of an instance of it in the sugar-plantations of Louisiana, *where great profits render attention to economy less necessary.*" † "The keen-sighted spirit of a necessary avarice," we are told, "has taught the planter of Dutch Guiana to view the general introduction of task-work as the most profitable manner of working his slaves." ‡ We will not stop to inquire why the Jamaica planter has not more generally adopted it. But, if even the voluntary exertion of a slave is found thus to exceed the utmost sum of involuntary labour that can be extorted from him in the same time by means of the *driving* system, how much more efficient must be the voluntary labour of a free man! Could a stronger proof be given of the paralyzing influence of slavery on human exertion, than the beneficial results that have followed this slight modification of the system, by which the will of the labourer is found to perform in ten hours, what

to advertise for persons, natives of that country, who may be willing to go over to Bourbon, under legal contract for seven years, with the monthly wages (in most cases) of four piastres (about seventeen shillings), &c. And, besides this, the person for whom they are thus hired, pays their passage over, and binds himself to send them back to their own country, should they wish it, at the expiration of the term prescribed by the contract. And yet, with all this expense, these persons are greedily sought for; and when I was there, a few months ago, there were about 7,000 of them in the island."

* Telfair's State of Slavery, &c. pp. 95, 97.

† Letter to Say, p. 22.

‡ *Ib.* (cited from Brougham) p. 21. In Cuba also, piece work is generally adopted by the Spanish planters. See V.-Ad. Fleming's Evid. cited above.

the whip could not accomplish in twelve? If the mere prospect of getting through his task sooner, is thus sufficient to stimulate the physical powers of the slave to a greater exertion than he would otherwise be capable of putting forth, (for there is a strength imparted by such a stimulant,) what reason can we have to suppose that the hope of remuneration would be less effective in stimulating the free labourer? If task-work thus increases the productiveness of slave labour, because it relaxes the manacles which fetter the will and energies of the labourer, how much more would the voluntary labour of the free-man accomplish, under the higher stimulation of self-interest, and with the prospect of personal gain!

The system of task-work, moreover, may be made to furnish, under the system of free labour, not only a stimulus to the labourer, but a security to the employer, to whom it gives a certain hold upon the party contracting to perform it. If that voluntary contract is not fulfilled, a substantial ground of reasonable complaint is afforded, of which the law would take cognizance. The labourer might justly be punished in such case by suitable penalties.

And this leads us to the last point in the inquiry: namely, whether it would not be practicable and easy to accompany the emancipation of the slave population with such efficient restrictions as should obviate any inconvenience that might otherwise attend so sudden a change in their condition.

The problematical evils to be provided against would seem to be: 1. Their running loose into a state of general vagabondage, or taking themselves off into the interior. 2. Their refusing to work at all in the plantations for wages. Or, 3. Their not labouring steadily and perseveringly, so as to furnish the requisite amount of labour within a given time which the wants of the cultivator may demand.

1. Against the first of these evils, provision might ob-

viously be made by a law of settlement, attaching the negro population to the soil, and by visiting with penal severities those who should be convicted of a vagabond life. Provided that the white and the black vagabond were subjected to the same law, and punishable only by the magistrate, there would be no injustice in such enactments, should they be deemed expedient. Against their expediency, however, it may be objected, that a regulation attaching the emancipated slaves to the soil, would, on the one hand, disturb the balance of free labour, and fetter the employer, who might be able to procure more efficient labourers at lower wages; while, on the other hand, the feeling of compulsory residence would tend to weaken the natural bond of attachment to home, which in the negro is remarkably strong, and to engender a spirit of discontent. To ensure the continued residence of the negroes on their present habitations, there now exists the strength of habit and local attachment on their part; besides which, so long as it should be the interest of the proprietor to detain them there, he would have a strong hold upon them as tenants. Mr. Scott, of Trelawney, a Jamaica Proprietor, on being asked by the Commons' Committee, "Are not the slaves very much attached to their present homesteads?" replies: "Yes, I believe they are generally."

"Do you not think that, in case of emancipation, they would be ready to pay a certain rent to be allowed to remain?—A great many of them would; and I think a great many of them would go to the towns.

"Do not you think that if they were industrious they would be able to pay that rent?—If they were industrious, certainly.

"You have said that they would be disposed to cultivate provisions in preference to working upon sugar-plantations?—I think it very likely, if they had good provision-grounds to work on, and as long as they could find a market.

"Must not there be a limit to the quantity of provisions raised?—Certainly.

"Would not the market rate of price for those provisions, as they became larger in quantity, decrease?—Certainly it would;

and when they overstocked the market, they would very likely quit the cultivation of provisions, and they would work awhile for the sugar-planter or coffee-planter.

" You are aware of the extreme reluctance which the negroes feel to remove from their village which has been built for them? —They have a most unaccountable aversion to it. I recollect an instance upon my own estate, where I thought it necessary to remove them from an unhealthy to a healthy situation, and I had a great deal of trouble about it; I not only built new houses and better houses than they had before, but I had great difficulty in getting them to go into them." (Q. 5270—4; 5099.)

Such being the case, the fear of losing a comfortable habitation, of being driven from their provision-grounds, which they have learned to value as property, as well as the feeling of local attachment, must act as a powerful restraint upon migration. If the negro removes, he must remove either to land belonging to the Crown or to the estates of individuals. As to the former, it might be advisable that the Crown should not, for the present, allow any of the land in its possession to be inhabited or brought into cultivation, but only to be let or sold at a price or rent inferior to that which can be obtained for the land of a similar quality in the hands of private proprietors. The door to migration and vagrancy would thus be blocked up; nor would this, we apprehend, be found a matter of serious difficulty, either in Jamaice or in the smaller islands. The numbers of those negroes who, in a state of emancipation, would be disposed to quit their homes to seek a hard subsistence in the uncultivated parts, away from their old connexions, would, it may safely be presumed, not be large; certainly not so large but that a very small police establishment would be amply sufficient to keep them in control.*

* The History of the Maroons, neglected and abandoned as they have been, furnishes a strong corroboration of this position. Mr. Scott was asked, in his examination before the Commons' Committee, whether it had been found necessary to establish any strong police to keep them in order. His answer is: " No, they are not so numerous; there is a superintendent

No great temptation to remove would be afforded by the facility of procuring habitations on lands at present owned by individual proprietors, the greater proportion of such lands being in a state of cultivation, and consequently yielding a rent. The chief inducement would be to remove to the towns; where, if they could obtain a livelihood by their own industry, they would cease to be vagrants. If they could not get their bread there, they would become obnoxious to the police laws. Upon the whole, the numbers who would become vagrant, would in all probability not be much greater than become runaways under the present system. But to obviate any possible danger, a temporary regulation might be adopted, agreeably to the suggestion of Mr. Loving, fixing the present population upon the plantations, till the result of the experiment should be ascertained.

2. In respect to the second of the apprehended evils, their refusing to work upon the plantations, the remarks of this last-named witness, although they may be considered as the statement of an individual opinion, rather than evidence of fact, are highly deserving of attention.

"Are you able to form an opinion as to the relish the negroes have for the comforts and conveniences of life, and of their willingness to labour hard in order to obtain them?—There is no doubt whatever, and this I can say, from my own personal knowledge, that the slaves are very great lovers of those little comforts of life which we all seek after, let our condition be ever so poor; hence arises the very great industry they use in the intermediate time between the drawing them off from the labour, and the resumption of it, that is, the period allowed them for their breakfast and dinner.

always at the town, who settles all their disputes, and they have their own courts and regulations, which they make for themselves." "Are there not several Maroon towns?" "Yes." Generally speaking, this witness admitted, they are quiet and well-behaved persons. They maintain themselves entirely by their own labour, and the population is on the increase. See Q. 5277—5279, and 236.

" Is not that labour necessary, in order to secure to themselves and their families the necessaries of life?—Unquestionably, and even after he has done his master's work, at night, he will set out and travel perhaps six miles, with some little commodity to dispose of, in order to administer to his little comforts.

" Do you conceive that, except for a very high rate of wages, a free negro would consent to dig cane-holes, when by lighter work, and at much lower wages, he might obtain the necessaries of life?—I have thought of that subject more than once, and have always been of opinion, and am still of opinion, that one-third of the slaves, if they were emancipated to-morrow, would not return to field labour, unless some law was passed for the purpose of confining those persons to those pursuits in life to which they have been brought up. That third who would not labour in that way, I conceive, would be persons that have been disgusted with the life they have lived hitherto, and that indeed they wish to get rid of it, because they deem it a punishment. But where could they get bread? they would come into the towns; they could not get it there; they must become vagrants, and disease, or the strong arm of the law, would sweep off the whole of that third; and, consequently, whenever I have thought of the abolition of slavery, I have always put it down in my mind, that, unless some regulations were made to confine the present agricultural labourers to that mode of life to which they had been brought up, one-third of them would abandon it, while, on the other hand, the remaining two-thirds, I do believe, would attach themselves strictly to the soil; because it is one of the properties of a creole negro to be fond of the place of his birth; he calls it (I have heard them call it so myself) his 'born ground;' in fact, the associations of his childhood are all laid there; he has his little fruit-trees and other things about his little hut, and he has his family. If he removes from thence, where can he get a house? Nowhere. If he comes into the towns, he must purchase every thing he uses; he cannot pick up a little fire-wood as he does in the country; he cannot pick any of those esculents which may be found wild in some parts, and make himself a dish of any thing; he must put his hands into his pocket to procure even the most trifling necessaries of life; the majority of them are well aware of this, and, if they were made free, they would be desirous to remain where they are;

and nothing but a hatred of a white master would, in my opinion, induce them to leave the identical properties upon which they are now.

" When you say that you think a portion of them would work upon the plantations where they have been accustomed to live, do you mean that they would work at sugar-planting, or what? —They would be compelled to work at that occupation to which they had been brought up, otherwise they must starve."

(Q. 1961, 2, 6, 9.)

The proportion who would be unwilling to persevere in field labour, would vary of course, in different islands, and on different estates; and vary in proportion to the humane or cruel treatment they have been subjected to. When this Witness expresses his conviction, that " one third, from hard treatment and cruel usage, and other causes, have so completely turned their mind against agricultural pursuits, that, in the event of emancipation, they would put down the hoe, expecting that they would be able to get labour of a lighter description elsewhere; "—he must be considered as speaking the language of conjecture as to the proportion who would be disposed so to act, but of experience as to the cause of their disinclination to field labour; a cause, let it be remembered, which reflects no discredit upon the negroes, as implying any deficiency of industry. And if confined to the plantations, in point of residence, they would be compelled to subsist by their accustomed labour.

In isolated cases of manumission, it is natural, for reasons already adverted to, that the enfranchised labourer should pass at once from the field to some domestic or handicraft employment. Were this practice widely extended, it might immediately subtract from the required cultivation of the soil. The much-respected Archdeacon of Barbados, Mr. Eliot, has noticed this objection to manumission, in his recently published Lectures on Christianity and Slavery.

" I must allow," he says, " that agricultural labour is in

great disrepute in the West Indies. It is not so in other countries, for we often find even the well educated and the affluent delighting in the cultivation of a garden or in the ruder employments of a farm. In the West Indies, field labour is always associated with the whip and the driver, and other tokens of personal degradation; we therefore cannot wonder that it is generally shunned.

"The first step towards the removal of the existing dislike to this species of employment is, to engage the great mass of our population in a kind of voluntary field labour, of which the profits may to a certain extent perceptibly accrue to themselves. To work spontaneously, and for our own immediate benefit, is the distinctive character of freedom. . . . .Would they be likely, after having earned so many and great advantages by field labour, to regard it with dissatisfaction, and to consider themselves degraded by following their former occupation? Would they not rather, if the permission were allowed them, continue to work for their masters as tenants on the estate, receiving either wages in money for their labour, or a portion of the produce of the land! *I believe the present condition of the sugar-plantations in those States of South America which have granted entire freedom to their slaves, will furnish a satisfactory answer to these questions.*"*

3. But still, it may be apprehended, that the negroes, though restricted from vagrancy, and compelled to labour on the plantations for the means of subsistence, or, as a condition of retaining their huts and provision-grounds, could not be induced to labour with sufficient diligence and steadiness to answer the purpose of the planter. This apprehension, however, originates entirely in an utterly erroneous estimate of the negro character. It is supposed that he is a being too degraded to be acted upon by those stimulants to exertion which are elsewhere found of sufficient force to overcome the natural love of ease. In reference to this point, the examination of Mr. Scott, of Trelawney, is most instructive. This gentleman, while exhibiting all

* Eliot on Christianity and Slavery, pp. 229, 230.

the prejudices of a slave-proprietor, so as to be led to hazard the monstrous opinion, that "a man is more industrious in a state of slavery, than when he is in a state of freedom," is nevertheless compelled to concede, though with obvious reluctance, almost every thing that a friend to emancipation could desire, with regard to the disposition of the negroes to labour, not merely for necessaries, but for the comforts and even luxuries of life.

"Is not the motive of maintaining himself, and acquiring the comforts of life, sufficient to stimulate persons to labour?—Yes; but the great body of them would be content with so little, that I do not think it would stimulate them at all.

"Are they contented with so little now?—Many of them are.

"Do not a considerable portion of them work to acquire articles of luxury?—Certainly they do; there is no doubt that there are a number of negroes who are wealthy, and there will be found among them more money than among an equal number of the peasantry in this country.

"Is there not a considerable number of such negroes?—Yes.

"And the money they have so acquired has been the produce of their own industry?—Yes.

"Why should they not do the same when they become free?—Those people would do the same, but they are a small proportion of the whole.

"The Committee have been informed, that a very large proportion of the field negroes possess considerable comforts and luxuries beyond the mere necessaries of life?—So they do, they have plenty of food, and so on.

"Do not they set a high value upon clothing of a different description which their masters give them?—Yes, they buy a good deal of clothing themselves.

"Are they not very fond of finery?—Yes, many are.

"Then if, notwithstanding they are compelled to work so many hours for their master, they will yet work in their extra time to get those articles of luxury, why should not they do the same if they are emancipated?—A great number of them would, I have no doubt, but not generally.

" Is not their present motive the acquisition by their labour of things deemed beneficial, and would not that motive exist even more strongly if they were capable of dedicating their whole time to the acquisition of that which they deem valuable? —Yes, with a certain proportion of them; but I should say the smaller proportion.

" Supposing that the greater proportion were to shew themselves to be industrious, would not the inevitable consequence of that industry be, an increased demand for all those articles which are now consumed by the negroes as articles of luxury? —I think a great proportion of the negroes would be contented with very little, and which little they could get with very easy labour.

" Are they contented with that little now?—A great many of them are.

" Do not a large proportion of them try to get something beyond what the master allows them?—I do not think it is likely that a large proportion of them would do more work than was necessary to afford them the usual comforts of life.

" Do you think that the desire for fine clothing would end with emancipation?—No, I do not.

" If a man has a desire for the luxuries of life, is it not consistent with your experience that that desire goes on increasing? —It is human nature, certainly.

" Did you ever know a man say, when he had got 100*l.*, that he had got enough, or would he not rather try to get a little more?—Certainly.

" Would not the negroes act upon that principle?—Many would, no doubt, but some would not.

" Are not the negroes possessed of the same feelings, generally speaking, in that respect, as white persons?—I suppose they are; they are human creatures, and according to their intelligence, they are influenced in the same way.

" Moved by fear, and excited by reward?—Of course." *

This same Witness declares, that, even as to digging the cane-holes, the work in itself is not half so hard as digging ditches in this country. Upon his estate, " *the cane-hole*

* Commons' Report, Q. 5369—5388.

diggers are all volunteers." "When they are upon that work, they have plenty of punch, and *they take a sort of pride in being considered able for that description of work,*" which is not unfrequently task-work. Now if we may place any reliance upon these statements, it is obvious, that there can be little ground to fear that the same inducements would fail to secure the requisite number of "volunteers" among the enfranchised slaves, who would probably be not less subject to pride, nor less fond of money, finery, or punch.

There are, however, motives of a higher order, of which the negroes have shewn themselves not unsusceptible; motives to steady industry, sobriety, and fidelity to their employers, which are supplied by the principles of Christianity, when brought to bear upon the character. That the negroes who have been brought under the influence of religious training, may be depended upon as industrious labourers as well as faithful and grateful servants, the history of the recent insurrection in Jamaica fully establishes. Many of the estates were saved from devastation entirely by the exertions of the slaves themselves, acting under the influence of the instructions received from their despised and persecuted teachers. It must not be concealed, that the safety and beneficial results of any plan of emancipation, would very greatly depend upon the facilities that should be afforded to the self-denying and persevering labours of the Missionaries, who exert so powerful an influence over the slave population.

Such a plan, however, to be either safe or effective, must be of a decisive character. It must not attempt to combine the two opposite and incompatible systems of free and slave labour. It must not superadd the cost of free labour to the waste and burden of slavery.* It must not destroy coercion,

* In a valuable statistical account of the Spanish Colony of Porto Rico, with the perusal of which we have been favoured, it is stated, that, for

by a plan which supplies no motives for labour; which precludes alike the stimulus of competition, the sense of gratitude, or the immediate prospect of advantage. It must not detain upon the plantations that redundant portion of labour which might be altogether economized by a better system. It must not continue to hang a dead weight upon the elastic springs of human industry, while the machinery is yet expected to work without embarrassment. The substitution of free labour for bond labour of every description can alone indemnify the planter for the loss of his living capital, and redeem him from the effect of the standing economical blunder in which he has so long and so fatally persisted. Slavery must be abolished. Its total abolition will carry compensation with it. Any thing short of entire and immediate emancipation will fail of its object; will be ruinous to the planter, unjust to the slave, unsafe to the colonies, and, in a word, not merely impolitic, but impracticable.

about 1*s.* sterling per day, a free labourer there will work in the field from sun-rise to sunset, and, on a moderate calculation, will perform more work during that time, than two slaves. Now as not more than two slaves out of three on a sugar estate can be reckoned upon as able-bodied, efficient labourers, one free labourer supported by wages, would do the work of at least *three* slaves under the present system. Mr. Wildman, an experienced planter, calculates, that the cost of his slaves, converted into money, taking aged and young and the females into the account, averages 5*l.* a head *per annum*. Suppose the planter relieved from the burden of redundant labour, instead of 100 slaves, old and young, sick and well, at an annual cost of 5*l.* per head, he would require, perhaps, 30 labourers at 15*l.* or 16*l.* a head. Or suppose a higher rate of wages, to meet this cost of free labour, in part, he would derive a rent from letting to the enfranchised negroes their provision-grounds.

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